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OF

✓
DR CHARLES WEBSTER,

FOUNDER OF AND LECTURER AT ST PETER'S CHAPEL, EDINBURGH;
CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM LORD GRAY;
AND PHYSICIAN TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES,
AND TO HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES IN THE WEST INDIES.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

DR ALEXANDER WEBSTER,

OF THE HIGH CHURCH, EDINBURGH.

BY

GRACE WEBSTER.

EDINBURGH: SUTHERLAND AND KNOX.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.

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THE
GOLDEN
GOLDEN

THE GOLDEN GLOBE

BOX 9225

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P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the following pages has reason to fear that, in the present day, any work of a religious character can have little acceptance with the public, unless it abound in the vehement advocacy of the popular tenets of leading sects. In the absence of that attraction to a certain class of readers, it is also to be apprehended, that, with other readers of a more general kind, its chance of success is not great, the narrative being destitute of those stirring and striking events of current public importance which ensure interest in the perusal. It is therefore intended chiefly as a tribute of respect to the memories of the departed.

ALEXANDER WEBSTER and CHARLES WEBSTER were men whose services in the Church of Christ, and whose efforts to promote the general good of society, were great, and of permanent usefulness. The Author of this very imperfect memorial of them humbly hopes, that if the reading public naturally prefer intellectual entertainment of a loftier kind and of more secular importance, either in a scientific or a political point of view, there may be at least a few among each of the various denominations of fellow-Christians, in this our favoured land of Scripture light and Gospel liberty, who may find throughout the volume a few passages here and there to interest or please them. The general remarks regarding society in its religious aspects, which form the preliminary of the work, are rather drawn from historical facts than derived from speculative opinion.

Fac-simile of Dr Charles Webster's handwriting.

I am ever, my Dear Sir,
Yours affly,
Charles Webster.

Fac-simile of the Rev. John Webster's handwriting, from the fly-leaf of a Family Bible,
presented by him to his Mother.

To Mrs George Webster,
with most dutiful respects
from her Son
John Webster



INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

IF the establishing of truth be worth the contending for, many of the false and erroneous statements, both with respect to individuals and events, might be prevented from obtaining circulation in the world, if those who are most interested or concerned in the accuracy of historical or biographical details would give the narration of them themselves, rather than incur the risk of facts falling into oblivion that ought to be preserved ; or, what is worse, misstatements being made that cannot afterwards be contradicted. It has been said, both by poets and critics, that every man's life has a history. But every man's history would not be important to the public,

though important to himself. There is, however, a class or section of human society about which the public think they have a right to be informed; and if no accurate memorial is afforded them, the desideratum is made up by invention or conjecture. In this case it is but too obvious that many persons must suffer both posthumously and in their lifetime; and although, in the highest and Christian sense, men of strong minds and high principle are not apt to be greatly discomposed at vulgar rumours or groundless assertions, which are seldom worth refutation, yet it seems not unreasonable that individuals whose names are known to the public, and likely not to be altogether forgotten by posterity, should give such an account of their own views and feelings, habits, and personal history, as would supersede the necessity of its being done by a stranger, who, either from want of materials or from wrong information, may put on record much that is without foundation, while that which is worthy to be preserved is lost or forgotten. And if the individual himself have not had an opportunity to perform this task,

those relatives or friends who are likely to be best informed on the subject should take it upon themselves, in order to prevent strangers, who are unqualified for the right performance of it, from undertaking what they cannot do with heart or justice ; for it has been well remarked, that to hope that men will in earnest assist in setting forth the mental qualifications and pre-eminence of others, is an expectation which, generally speaking, must needs be disappointed. It is on this account that so many unauthenticated biographies and anecdotes of eminent individuals—the cheap issues of the press—find ready circulation among a certain class of readers, for whose tastes they are written and decorated with vulgar fictions—anything, in short, that will make the publication sell, and remunerate the speculator in the adventure, without respect to the sacredness of the memory of departed good men.

Any one at all acquainted with literary labours knows how difficult it is to present to the public matters of universal or general interest.

Private diaries or experiences, though a true

state of the mind and feelings of the individual who records them, yet, if they are only of a spiritual and religious character, can only find acceptance with a certain portion of readers ; they are dry and profitless to others, who will not tax themselves with the perusal of what runs counter to their taste. But to please the taste or prejudices of any particular class or party ought not to be the motive in any degree of the writer who aims at nothing more than to present a simple, unsophisticated statement of truth ; and in the prosecution of this task which the Author has imposed upon herself, it is not without a hope that the cause of pure, social virtue, and of sound religion itself, may thereby be promoted.

CHAPTER II.

IN entering upon an account of a minister of religion it is not possible to avoid touching upon various religious opinions, and shewing a preference for one side rather than another. In this way a man involves himself in the imputation of being a partial writer. This imputation may be cast upon the most enlightened historian, and is not unfrequently so by those of narrow information and small capacity. To please such is almost a hopeless task; and the writer of liberal views, but steady principles, can rarely render himself acceptable, except to those who take the same comprehensive view of things as himself.

Persons of small information generally adopt the sentiments of some passionate historian of their own party, and have no toleration for any other view of the matter. But, before entering upon the narrative part of this work,

a few remarks may be indulged in by the writer, which may tend to clear away prejudices, and give a general view of the religious aspect of the world, and its characteristic features at all periods of society.

Excitement is not truth, neither is popular applause conviction. The religious tumults which, from time to time, disturb the Christian world, are generally the result of delusions palmed upon popular ignorance. And this is equally true, whether it be some direct imposture practised upon the public, or the results of men attempting to awaken them out of errors into which they have previously been drawn. In the latter case, the rectifier of abuses, misled by the treacherous longings of the heart after human applause, generally forfeits the character of the calm advocate of truth, by exaggerating the importance or the extent of the evils which he combats, in order to magnify his own achievements, and becomes the mere infuriated partizan—delighting to see mankind frantic with disputations,—and sweeping away, in his impetuosity, truth as well as falsehood,—

like the angry tide, that, not content with the salutary work of washing away the impure soil and rubbish on its banks, rushes onward, and devastates the fruitful fields which lie beyond. The passions of ignorant and weak men are easily moved. It is not so with men of well-informed and strong minds: their judgment and understanding must be convinced before they adopt any set of principles, however forcibly thrust upon their attention. But men of well-informed minds are not those who have merely kept pace with the advancement and refinement of an age dazzled with the excessive light of universal but superficial knowledge; nor are they, like many who are learned about that which does not concern them, or rather mere smatterers—retailers of other men's notions and sayings—mere pickers-up of scrap learning. On the contrary, they may not be acquainted with all that is going on in the world: as the human mind is not infinite, they have not attempted to take in universal knowledge. There may be discoveries in science which they are not ashamed to confess they have never studied, and there

may be opinions in religion of which they have never heard ; but, well-grounded in the first principles of things, based upon a thorough knowledge of the history of past ages, both in respect to human events and ascertained physical causes, they are not apt to be overwhelmed with surprise at any result which may occur within the range of human observation ; otherwise they would be no farther advanced in information and intelligence than those original inhabitants of the New World, who were overawed by the ability of their new masters in calculating an eclipse ; as we are told Columbus did in 1560, when driven by a tempest to Jamaica, and, by predicting that event, he frightened the natives into supplying him with provisions : or like those fanatics of Thuringia, whom their leader Thomas Muncer persuaded to regard the rainbow as the sign which was given them as a pledge of their safety. “The heathen are dismayed at the signs of heaven,” (Jer. x.) on account of their ignorance of the true God and his works ; whereas he who is enlightened by Divine truth is not dismayed, though he

considers that everything is as wonderful in its harmonious arrangement as if each event were the immediate effect of Divine interposition. Hence also it is (as has often been said), that he who has studied as the works of God the wonders of creation, does not regard as incredible the wonders of revelation. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? All things are possible with God," becomes the language of his heart: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," becomes his confession and his prayer. And in regard to human events, he becomes a discernor of spirits: he is not apt to mix up the results of human passions with dispensations of Divine grace or providence. Being well acquainted with the history of human society, both in its civil and religious aspects, he is not astonished at revolutions in human affairs, nor carried away by them, as novelties which never happened before.

The first and most valuable characteristic of a man in his social Christian position is stedfastness—stedfastness distinct from obsti-

nacy, which is a dogged adherence to error, and is the offspring of ignorance—but steadfastness, in opposition to that flexibility and wavering which are likewise the fruits of ignorance, and characterise those who are tossed about with every wind of doctrine. And this steadfastness which renders a man valuable in society, is the result of knowledge well digested by a vigorous understanding: it is a conviction of right principles, founded on the basis of unerring truth, and not expediency: it is the result of a knowledge which embraces at one view the whole range of past human events, and the revealed word and will of God, which enables him to fix the theory by which he is to regulate his line of duty. Mere impulses, which are the effect of human excitement, produce no fluctuation in his opinions; and popular clamour can neither frighten nor drive him from his position.

From generalities we may descend to particulars. Mere abstract views are often misunderstood, and seldom produce useful results. The fashion of the age is, that people are too diffuse in their acquirements; and the conse-

quence is, that there is scarcely anything but mere surface-knowledge—a scrap here and a scrap there, but nothing that can form a satisfactory whole.

There was once a family of five brothers, all highly-educated and accomplished; but the one who possessed the most knowledge was he who, properly speaking, had the fewest opportunities of acquiring it. He was a midshipman on board a man-of-war ship, for several years upon a distant station at sea. With no opportunity of observing human nature but in his intercourse with the crew of the vessel, or occasional visits to the shore, and with only a few books which had been selected with paternal care, he returned home with a more thorough knowledge of men and things than his elder brothers, who had had all the advantages of extensive libraries and unlimited intercourse with the world. He had read his few volumes over and over again, and not a proposition which they contained but he was master of, and had studied in all its aspects. His brothers had devoured interminable stores of books, but nothing was

permanently fixed on their minds: they had travelled, and had mixed with the most polished circles abroad, as well as in their own country, but they had viewed only the gloss and glare of life, and never looked under the surface. Of the real characteristics of human nature they were ignorant; and they owned that the stripling whose lack of advantages they had so often lamented, had, in his probation of hardship, acquired a knowledge of mankind, and of the passions by which they are actuated, far superior to their own.

This is mentioned as a mere fact, and not set down as a general principle to act upon, otherwise it might be inferred from it that more is to be learned in a narrow range or circumscribed sphere than in an extended one, which is not the case. But it proves that steady observation of the facts that come within the sphere of actual experience, however limited that sphere may be, confers the advantages of a well-informed mind on him who exercises that observation aright; and this is in the power of every man who has

the right use of the reason which God has given him.

In observing the habits and views of a child, whose notions of things are naturally within a small compass, we see that he considers all that appertains to his own domestic circle as the *ultimatum*, *ne plus ultra*, or perfection of things. *My house, my father, my mother, my garden*, are in his eyes the model for all others. But when youth goes out into the world in quest of knowledge, or rather novelty, he emancipates himself from those narrow views, and despises those things which seemed before of paramount importance. But after manhood has engaged in the turmoil of life, and has become wearied of its cares and what ceases to be its novelties, he falls back upon his pristine ideas: his home, his friends, his early associations, and his early predilections, again acquire the importance in his estimation that they had before, and he seeks the repose of home joys. The child's ideas are the voice of nature: the old man's are the verdict of experience.

And in the spiritual life it is the same as

in the natural life: When a man has gone the round of excitement, and followed after the tide of religious opinions that may be current in his day, he falls back upon heaven-born truth at the last, whether he may have the power to confess it or not.

Any leader of a party, who has been contending all his life for opinions which he has persuaded himself, and would make the world believe, were of paramount importance, and identical with Divine truth, when laid upon his deathbed, will feel that he has been deceiving himself and others in his strife, which he mistook for godly zeal, and nothing but "What shall I do to be saved?" shall then seem the question of any importance.

While all respect is due to the ministers of religion as the ambassadors of Christ, whom we ought to esteem very highly for their work's sake, an enlightened Christian people are to be upon their guard not to be led away by those ambassadors when they come with a commission not warranted by their Divine Master. Not in the dark ages of spiritual tyranny alone do we see men attempting to

gain an undue ascendancy over the minds and understandings of the multitude, but we have seen it in the most enlightened era of the Christian world. Priestly invention and popular credulity are the chief means by which Satan ensnares mankind, and injures the cause of true religion. "These be thy gods, O Israel!" becomes the idolatrous shout of the people; and equal is their guilt with that of the stiffnecked Hebrews of old, though the idol set up for their worship have not the gross substantiality of a golden quadruped, but is only the impalpable phantom of some undefinable question in theology, difficult speculation, or church law, which men conjure up in their struggles for ecclesiastical supremacy, and set forth to their adherents for their reception as the test of their election to salvation.

But when the sincere private Christian is affected with that enthusiasm which is so contagious, and to which the public mind is by temperament predisposed, it is often the result of his total ignorance of church history. The generality of the religious public know little

beyond the small sect or party to which they may happen to belong. The individual, in his narrow estimate of things, judges of the Christian world as if it were comprised in the assemblage of which he forms a member. The eclat and popularity attending the favourite leader or teacher, to whom he may have attached himself from taste, interest, or that spirit of excitement by which leaders of small religious factions attract followers around the standard they have set up—and whose presumption, in pretending to discover any principle essential to the Gospel which was not known before, can only be equalled by the ignorance of those who believe them—regulates his estimate of the prosperity of the Church.

It has been the unhappy lot of us in the present day, to see a corner of the Christian world torn by divisions. The result will probably die away or dwindle down into insignificance, like all other agitations stirred up by inflamed human passions; and as the quiet and inoffensive Baptist of these times could scarce be recognised as the descendant, nor

identified with the fanatical and lawless founder of the sect, riding through the towns of Germany naked in his chariot, following the corrupt practices of the Nicolaitans of old, and claiming as a Christian privilege his plurality of wives ; so probably the peaceful successors of the furious polemics of our own native land may, in less than a century, have lost all the characteristic rancour of the party, and though still retaining perhaps the appellation assumed by the sect, may well wonder what their progenitors disputed about.

“Thy kingdom come !”—The prayer which the Church has offered up for eighteen centuries—sometimes in lukewarmness, or cold formality—sometimes in earnestness—Oh ! how earnestly do believers now offer it up !—yea, the aspiration never was raised more fervently than in these times, that Thy kingdom might come, and unity of heart and spirit reign among believers.

There are many things to be purified ; but the rude hands of contrivers of new systems, spare as little what Divine authority has instituted as what men have invented. Eager

only to make to themselves a name, they pay respect to nothing which impedes that object. The hateful spirit of the old Papacy, so much deprecated by modern innovators, governs too often their own systems, and its characteristics are easily discerned. There is that compassing of sea and land to make one proselyte—there is the measuring of men's faith by the gifts which they bestow at their shrine—there is that denouncing of those who differ from them in opinion—and all those other undeniable characteristics which identify them with the ancient Pharisees, as well as with the spiritual despots of all subsequent ages.

And we are to remark particularly, as an unquestionable proof that men are self-seekers, and not delegated by Divine commission, when they cast aside the great Apostle's precept, and instead of preaching the Gospel in those parts where there might be need of their labours, and avoiding to intrude on those fields where Christ is preached purely, zealously, and effectually, they make no scruple to build upon another man's foundation. They turn the Gospel into a trade, like the traffic

of the world : each man sets up his opposition shop at the door of his neighbour's, and calls aloud for customers. His anxiety to save souls—let him deny it if he can—is but very small in comparison with his anxiety to attract the multitude to himself. Lukewarm preaching and empty churches are no doubt to be deplored ; but let not the faithful minister of religion be dismayed or ashamed, though the wonder-seeking religious mob be attracted for a time to other quarters, and he be left alone in his ministrations with the small but stedfast remnant of his flock. Let it be remembered that to such there is a Divine blessing promised which the other cannot claim : Jesus Christ has said, “ Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them ;” but he has nowhere promised to be in the midst of the multitude assembled together from public curiosity, in the name of the favourite or fashionable public orator of the day.

Satan has many delusive ways of working : divisions and controversies are his work, as well as false peace. He hates the stedfast-

ness and security possessed by an awakened soul established by Divine grace: tossings to and fro are rather his delight; or that deceitful calm which self-complacency produces in disputatious men, after they have obtained a victory in the eyes of the world over those whom they have attacked, and of whom it truly may be said, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you."

God is little honoured by unstable men, however zealous they may be in his cause; and human institutions, however they may propose to advance them, are little benefited by them. There is often a great deal of knowledge possessed by an individual, without either the talent or opportunity of turning that knowledge to good account: while, on the other hand, the observer of human society cannot but marvel to see how much of the business of social life, whether in civil or religious matters, is often carried on by those who possess almost no knowledge, or at the best a mere smattering, of their respective professions. In fact, it is sometimes the most ignorant that make the most stir in the world, and obtain

the greatest eclat. Men of small information, but of warm imagination, often strike out bold schemes, and more especially in religion, which is more likely than any other thing to obtain the applause of followers. Experiments in legislation or commerce, or discoveries in science, when unsuccessful or false, are palpably discerned; but not so with regard to religion, which only exerts its influence on the imagination and mind of the enthusiast;—and there never was a man, let the rudiments of his theological education be ever so imperfect, who, if he professes to have a deeper or clearer knowledge of divinity than his fellows, will not find adherents to his cause.

But there can be no more discoveries with regard to the Gospel; and even if there were, no man is bound to believe them: an angel from heaven is not to be credited, far less a sinful fellow-mortal, who has no credentials to shew but those of his own forging. The evil human nature of man is fond of religious controversy and disputation: Satan himself is fond of it, and manifests his love for it in

his attempts to argue with the Almighty himself, whether as is revealed to us in the Old Testament dispensation, or in the New, when he came into contact in the desert with the Godhead in his assumed humanity. Satan is experienced in his modes of tempting mankind: he used to blind men by keeping them in the dark; he now blinds them by an overpowering light.

What we regard as old superstitions, we must remember were once new; and if ignorant men in the dark ages believed what their false spiritual guides told them, we must not condemn them because of its absurdity. Men in their present high state of enlightenment, believe things as erroneous, though not so palpably preposterous; and an era will come, when men will wonder at the credulity of our own age, as we do at that of those that are past.

What tends to establish the sincere and well-informed Christian in the most holy faith, often tends to shake the semi-infidel's small remnant of religious belief, and to obliterate it altogether. There is no doubt a large sec-

tion of society, especially the female portion of it, who have almost nothing else to do than to go about hearing religious arguments ; but we do not see a corresponding improvement. But it must also be remembered that the vast bulk of the people are deeply engaged in fulfilling the penalty entailed upon human society—the earning their bread by the sweat of their brow. Whatever that labour may be—whether it be in the cabinet or the counting-house, the school of science or the field of agricultural industry—the individuals thus employed, to whom God, who knoweth all things, gave six days in the week to follow these things, foreseeing, in his Divine wisdom, that, according to the stages of human society, it would be sometimes found small enough space for the labourer to earn his daily bread ; —these have not time for entering into nice points of theological controversy. The essential doctrines of religion, which, like precious pearls, are of great value in small bulk, are all that are required ; and if they are called upon to give their time and attention to disputations about trifles, and be urged to it as

essential to their salvation, the mere worldly man will rather shake himself free of religion altogether, than be troubled with perplexing questions that cannot possibly be decided, and would not be worth deciding even if they could.

Thus religion, which is intended for the solace of the human race, and for a relief to the mind in the midst of the turmoils of life, is much retarded and injured by perverse disputings—they produce more infidelity than any other cause. If it were necessary to the soul's salvation, to settle in one's mind all the points that men dispute about, the generality of mankind must give it up in despair. Many of them, from want of capacity to understand the distinctions, and many of them from the above cause—mere lack of time to examine them. But, fortunately, though partizans and leaders of factions may say it is necessary, the Divine Founder of Christianity nowhere says it is so ; but, on the contrary, men are strictly warned against vain contentions and unprofitable questions.

CHAPTER III.

IN the first ages of Christianity many new converts, renouncing the old systems of religious faith, and not comprehending the new, ran into wild notions, which led to scandalous and immoral practices ;—the Nicolaitans, for example, who pleaded for strange privileges, as branches of Christian liberty. So at the Reformation, leaders of sects sprang up, who published tenets equally pernicious. They maintained that to those who had the Spirit of God to direct them, the office of the magistracy was not only unnecessary but an unlawful encroachment on their Christian liberty.

John Matthias, a baker, and John Boscold, a journeyman tailor, fixed their residence at Munster. They soon gained many converts, howling continually, “Repent, and be baptized ;” “Depart, ye ungodly,” and so forth. Matthias ordered all books to be destroyed

except the Bible. He commanded every man to bring forth his gold and silver, and lay them at his feet, which was a public sustentation fund for the sect. Their passions were kept from subsiding or cooling down by a perpetual succession of revelations, exhortations, and prophecies.

Boscold succeeded Matthias as the guide and ruler of those fanatics, was made king of Zion, and married fourteen wives, one of whom he murdered with his own hands, and was applauded by the rest for the action.

The Mennonites in the Low Countries were peacefully inclined. Simon Menno, a Romish priest, a native of Friesland, was the founder of the sect. He renounced the Popish church and embraced the principles of the Anabaptists, of which there were various kinds. But the peasants of Thuringia clamoured for liberty to choose their own pastors, that they might be exempted from tithes, and they wished to have unlimited liberty of hunting and fishing, and to be delivered from all taxes. They demanded freedom from oppression, and became intolerable oppressors themselves.

History affords many memorable instances of those who make a clamour for liberty and equality doing the same. The Papist calls out for toleration and liberty in Protestant communities, which he denies, and never dreams of in Roman Catholic countries, either to others or to himself. Oliver Cromwell taught his soldiers the doctrine of equality, and when they began to act upon the levelling principle, and entered into confederacies and associations for the purpose of introducing this system of equality among all people, and to put an end to all distinctions among men, their leader Oliver, who had taught them this lesson, appeared unexpectedly among them at their rendezvous on Hounslow Heath, and having with him some troops in whom he could confide, he corrected their insolence by charging them with his troops, slaughtering, and wounding some, seizing upon the rest, hanged as many of them on the spot as satiated his vengeance, and those whom he made prisoners he sent to London, to be tried for mutiny and rebellion. The settlers in New England could not conform at home in religious matters, but when

they crossed to America to enjoy freedom, they hanged all the Quakers who differed from them.

Mistaken or false zeal for the cause of God and Christian liberty has created much evil in the world; but it is a blessed thing that "the fierceness of man shall turn to God's praise, and the fierceness of them shall He refrain."

Thomas Muncer, a disciple of Luther, had the audacity and inconsistency to say, that Luther had done more hurt than service to religion, as some factious leaders of the present times have attempted to throw odium on those to whom the world is most indebted for the privileges they possess and enjoy without molestation.

The death of those furious agitators, in the common course of events, generally puts a stop to the insubordinate spirit which they stir up among their ignorant followers. And it is well that it is so. There is no limit to fanaticism, and nothing too extravagant for the human mind to adopt. Satan, the prince of the power of the air, works his work by those agencies. He per-

suades men, as he did at first when he compassed the fall of the human race, "Ye shall be as gods." Oh there is nothing so delusive to the human heart as to fancy itself to be possessed of superior wisdom, and to be puffed up with spiritual pride by those who flatter the ignorant, as being judges of the profoundest or most important doctrines of religion, while they remain strangers to the most common rules of right practice, and the plainest duties of social life !

A knowledge of historical facts, both as they regard the civil and religious polity of nations, is the best groundwork of education, and is the best safeguard against being imposed upon by statements calculated to mislead the understanding, and consequently to influence the conduct in a wrong direction.

Before the precise meaning of religious and civil liberty was understood, the two nations—Scotland and England—distinct from each other in temper and genius, though so near in geographical position, had been united into one empire under one sovereign, King James the First.

The prejudices and jealousies of the two kingdoms still remained. The English regarded with dislike and contempt their less civilized neighbours; and the Scots, with their natural and characteristic pride and independence, would admit of no superiority in the southrons, but regarded with jealousy any encroachment on their institutions by their now fellow-subjects. In nothing was this more conspicuous than in their religious matters. Various attempts were made to reconcile the differences between the national churches. But well-meant endeavours of pacific statesmen or churchmen were neutralized by the turbulence of unruly and unsettled factions. Protestant Episcopacy on both sides the Tweed was the same as it still is. But the Presbyterian form of church government, devised in the sixteenth century, was a new ingredient, and was introduced into Scotland in a tumultuary manner in the reign of Mary Queen of Scots. Episcopacy was subsequently restored, but only for a season. The mob, stirred up by the cry of their leaders, took upon themselves, in a riotous manner, to ex-

pel the bishops and clergy, and plunder their houses, outrageously abusing them and their families, so that many of them had to fly into England.

It has always been the policy of leaders of religious factions to abuse the Episcopal Church, and identify it with Popery. But the Church of England, in its pure and Scriptural character, as established at the Reformation, to which its thousands of martyrs set their seal by their blood, is farther removed from Popery than any other in its spirit and its standards. And that the Church of England has produced a larger body of theological literature and sound divinity than any other, is a fact that every one knows. And it would be a deplorable change in its character, if the descendants of its noble defenders of the faith should direct their talents to inferior objects.

Archbishop Abbot, one of the learned men who were employed in translating our present authorised version of the Scriptures, was one of those who aimed at reconciling the churches. He went over with George Hume, Earl of Dunbar, the Treasurer of Scotland, in order

to establish a union of the churches of England and Scotland ; and by his skill, prudence, and moderation, succeeded so far as to procure an act of the General Assembly, which was afterwards ratified and confirmed by the parliament of Scotland, that the king should have the calling of all general assemblies—that the bishops or their deputies should be perpetual moderators of their synods—that no excommunication should be made without their approbation—that all presentations to benefices should be made by them—that the deprivation or suspension of ministers should belong to them, and that the visitation of the diocese should be performed by the bishop or his deputy only ; and, finally, that the bishop should be moderator of all conventions for exercisings of prophesyings which should be held within their bounds.

Desirable as a union among *Protestant* Churches may be, it is a dangerous and a false liberality for them to wish for or attempt any union with Popery. The endeavours and proposals of Grotius towards a coalition of the Protestants and Papists elicited

just reprehension from the wellwishers of their country and of the Reformed faith ; and every wise and consistent Protestant, in every period since the Reformation, has considered such an attempt as a snare, and treated it accordingly.

Jesus Christ prayed that his followers should be one, that the world might believe that the Father had sent him. As this distinctive mark cannot now be discerned in the body of Christ, which is rent asunder and divided, no marvel then that the world believes not—that infidelity abounds, and the sceptic is not ashamed to avow his unbelief. The divisions among Protestants have always been their reproach ; and as the idolatrous worship of the Church of Rome has generally proved a stumbling-block in the way of the Mahometan and the Jew, to deter them from embracing Christianity, so the divisions in the Protestant world have at all times appeared a sufficient proof to the Roman Catholic of the unsoundness of the Reformed faith. But it must be borne in mind, that the boasted unity of the Church of Rome often cloaks

much concealed division. The alleged unity of the Roman Catholics is a false scheme of harmony. The people *dare* not utter a dissenting voice, and the *priests* will not. Their unity is like the outward good agreement of a domestic household or family, where every mark of dissension is carefully hidden from the eyes of the world; but where there is in reality nothing but secret strife and discord among all the members of it—husband and wife, sister and brother, parent and child, biting and devouring one another.

It is well known the burning jealousies, and dissent, and animosities, that have been among cardinals and other ecclesiastics, proceeding even to assassination and poisoning; and that one pope has not unfrequently denounced what his predecessor had done; declaring that to be damnable which another pontiff had declared to be essential to salvation; and yet both are infallible. Papists carefully conceal their quarrels and dissensions; but when Protestants disagree they make no secret of it, but quarrel publicly, and tell the world their grievances. Each discordant party ac-

quires its abettors, and thus new sects spring up. It is a hackneyed and a common phrase, that there are good men in all parties, and so, thanks to God's grace, and not to their "divisive courses," there are; but would they not be better men if they were all agreed?

The permanent advantages and means of usefulness possessed by the enlightened and liberal churchman place him in a very responsible position, and also elevate him above the harbouring in his mind the jealousies and envyings which are apt to distract those who are less favourably situated; and whilst he is persuaded of the advantages which the test of time has proved to be invaluable, he allows others to enjoy in peace their disadvantages as it suits their prejudices. Proselytism is no part of his scheme. But if any who opposed him come over to his ranks, he receives him kindly, but not exultingly, nor with boasting

Furthermore, if he be a sincere and humble disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will not be angry or distressed at the malice or contempt directed towards him by adversaries. He may indeed be sorry for the spirit of bit-

to establish a union of the churches of England and Scotland ; and by his skill, prudence, and moderation, succeeded so far as to procure an act of the General Assembly, which was afterwards ratified and confirmed by the parliament of Scotland, that the king should have the calling of all general assemblies—that the bishops or their deputies should be perpetual moderators of their synods—that no excommunication should be made without their approbation—that all presentations to benefices should be made by them—that the deprivation or suspension of ministers should belong to them, and that the visitation of the diocese should be performed by the bishop or his deputy only ; and, finally, that the bishop should be moderator of all conventions for exercisings of prophesyings which should be held within their bounds.

Desirable as a union among *Protestant* Churches may be, it is a dangerous and a false liberality for them to wish for or attempt any union with Popery. The endeavours and proposals of Grotius towards a coalition of the Protestants and Papists elicited

just reprehension from the wellwishers of their country and of the Reformed faith ; and every wise and consistent Protestant, in every period since the Reformation, has considered such an attempt as a snare, and treated it accordingly.

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terness which some men display, as indeed he must be at every manifestation of the corrupt fruits of the unrenewed heart; but with the example of his Divine Master always in his view, he considers that all that malevolence and Pharisaical rancour could invent was said against his Lord.

As the one great object of life to every individual is the eternal salvation of his own immortal soul, he will find it most safe, whatever degree of knowledge he may possess, and which should all be made subservient to that one great object, that the more he keeps himself disentangled from the affairs of the world, which do not lie within the actual sphere of his duty, the better. One man exhausts his energies and wastes his time in struggling for favourite opinions. Another makes himself unhappy about the misgovernment of the realms. The true Christian will give himself very little concern about how the affairs of the world go on. He knows himself to be upon a brief pilgrimage, and he feels that he is passing through a strange country. His home—his haven of rest—is ever in his heart,

and before his eye. But he is not a morose or sulky traveller. He is companionable, and cheerful and happy. He takes the people of the world as he finds them. If they love not God as *he* loves him with all his heart and soul and mind, he does not repel them with asperity, but tries to win them to that love, by the influence of his example, and the intercession of his prayers. And as God himself declares by his word, that He would that all men should be saved, he feels and desires the same; and he casts not, by his example, a stumbling-block in the path of any. He disturbs not himself with the diversities of opinion that prevail around him, but proceeds steadily and humbly on his way. Heaven is no remote or undefined region, upon which he would dread to enter. The veil which now obscures his vision will soon be drawn aside, and disclose the paradise that lies beyond. And it is no ideal beings with whom he is there to be in company—beings about whom he can form no conjecture, and with whom he has no sympathies, and to whose history he is a stranger; but he is to join the society

of those once of like passions with himself, about whose personality and identity there can be no mistake, like unto Moses and Elijah, as when they appeared in their glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, and all the redeemed from his brethren of mankind.

CHAPTER IV.

BEFORE entering upon the history of Dr CHARLES WEBSTER, some account of his eminent kinsmen may be given. The history of Dr Alexander Webster, who was of the same family, is not new to the public. It has appeared in various forms ; and he being a leading man in his day, few of the transactions of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland at that period are recorded without special mention being made of him ; and from his acts of permanent usefulness he is not likely to be forgotten. Alexander Webster was the most evangelical clergyman in the city. Indeed he was at the head of that party generally so designated. At an early age he had been appointed minister of Culross in Fife, and afterwards one of the ministers in the High Church, Edinburgh, now called West St Giles. He was the son of an equally distinguished

preacher, who had suffered in the persecuting times, and was afterwards minister of the same church for a period of thirty years. Dr Webster was descended from an ancient family in Fife. He was born in the year 1707, and choosing the study of divinity, speedily obtained a living in his father's native county, where he made himself so remarkable for his eloquence and piety, and the fidelity, activity, and diligence with which he discharged the duties of the pastoral office, that about four years after his first ordination he received a unanimous call from the congregation of the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh ; to which charge he was inducted on the 2d June 1737. His great abilities unfolded themselves in this new sphere of labour; and he was generally referred to in all affairs of importance, both in the church and in the city, the soundness of his judgment and clearness of his views in all matters of business being much to be confided in. He was appointed chaplain to Frederick Prince of Wales in 1739, two years after he was inducted into Edinburgh. This celebrated man was at once translated from Culross to the

collegiate charge of the Tolbooth Church, contrary to the usual practice of presenting first to a single charge. This was reckoned in those days a great innovation in his favour. But it can be explained satisfactorily. He became, by this arrangement, the immediate successor of his father, Mr James Webster, who for thirty years had been the pastor of that church, and had long been the idol of his hearers. Indeed, whatever opinion he delivered on any subject was oracular, and instantly acquiesced in by them. They had been so accustomed to a particular style of preaching, and to the selection of certain doctrines, treated and insisted upon after a certain fashion, that to have presented any other minister who followed a different course, and who rather leaned to giving moral and practical illustrations, would have produced a rebellion, and rendered all parties very uncomfortable. The patrons therefore, to pacify the congregation, consulted their prejudices, and presented the son of their late beloved minister, who possessed very popular talents, and preached Calvinistic doctrines, though he

was by no means so extreme in his views as his late excellent father was.

Mr James Webster was famous in his day. He was eminent for learning and piety. He was a fervent and pathetic preacher; his manner of preaching may be gathered from his sermons, printed after his death in 1723. These discourses display great ability; and in his plain and energetic style, peculiarly adapted to the capacity of his hearers, it is easy to discern the true preacher of evangelical truth, and the heart that leads to God and heaven. His sermons are indeed of no ordinary kind; they have an awakening energy about them which few preachers of the present day could equal.

He died in May 1720, universally regretted. Many elegies were composed upon the occasion, some of which were published in a curious pamphlet, with an historical account of his life. This strenuous and powerful assertor of Gospel truth, in opposition to error, who had justly acquired the character of a man of eminent piety, was indeed a prince and a great man in Israel.

In the unsettled and unhappy period in which he lived, when no party seemed to understand the true spirit of toleration, he was not without his troubles. We who live in happier times ought to value our privileges above every thing. The following brief extract is from his sermon on the "Gift of God, which is Eternal Life :"—

"Future happiness is altogether free. It is called a gift, and ye know that lawyers define a gift to be, *that which is mine becomes thine, without any law obliging me.* Nothing freer than the gift. It is called an inheritance. The heir, though very unworthy, and though he has not wrought for a good estate, yet it is conveyed to him freely by his parents; so this eternal life is called the inheritance of the saints in light, and, consequently in Scripture, all merit of good works is excluded."

Mr Ebenezer Erskine, styled the "Father of the Secession Church," married a daughter of the Rev. James Webster about three years and a half after the death of his first wife. The account of this union is extracted from his Life, by Frazer. "It pleased God to give

him a second partner, and one who was much recommended to him by her relation to a father in the ministry, whom he held in great veneration for his piety, and his zealous efforts in the cause of evangelical truth. His gratitude to God for this new providential favour, and his solicitude to obtain the Divine blessing on the interesting connection in immediate prospect, appear from the following sentences, extracted from an entry relating to this subject:—*Thursday, January 16, 1724.*—This night eight nights is the time fixed upon for my marriage with Miss Mary Webster, the worthy daughter of that worthy champion for the truth and cause of Christ, Mr James Webster. Much of the Lord's hand has been seen in carrying on this design hitherto. And now, this night, between 10 and 11, I fell down on my knees, saying to this effect:—‘ Oh, my God, my Father who art in heaven, and my blessed Elder Brother and Priest, who art passed into the heavens, I invite, I entreat thy presence to my marriage with thy handmaid. My father and her father are among the ransomed company that are singing thy praises

before the throne ; and, therefore, I plead and pray, that thou mayest shew so much kindness to their children, as to countenance us in this design with thy presence ; seeing that thou hast said, I will be their God, and the God of their seed ; and will shew mercy to thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. Doubtless thou art my Father ; thou art my Father, and thy name is from everlasting. Oh, my Elder Brother, who lovedst me, and gavest thyself for me, thou didst accept of an invitation to the marriage of Cana in Galilee, and honour it with thy bodily presence, and there shewedst forth thy glory. May I hope and believe that thou wilt accept of this invitation, and grace my marriage with thy spiritual presence ? I shall reckon this an honour indeed.

“ O Lord, thou art my God, I will prepare thee an habitation ; my father’s God, and I will exalt thee. O let the God of the bride and her father’s God come along with her to this family. Let her come as a blessing to me, and to the children whom thou hast given me ; and O dwell with her and me, and the

little ones; and then, though we live in a solitary place, we shall not be a solitary family, but the voice of melody and of rejoicing shall be heard in this tabernacle, as in the tabernacles of the righteous. O let us be a blessed couple in the Lord; let us live in the Lord, and die in the Lord, and love one another in the Lord. O turn not away my prayer, nor thy mercy from me.' ”

This marriage was accordingly celebrated on Thursday, 23d January 1724.

His second wife, Miss Webster, was spared to him till March 1751. She had several children. She had two sons, James and Alexander, who died abroad, and three daughters, none of whom, except Mary, the eldest, reached maturity. Mary kept her father's house after her mother's death. She was a dutiful and affectionate daughter, cheerful and lively in her temper; and attended on her father with unwearied care. She was never married, and died at Glasgow, 1786. For the information of the general reader we may state, that Ebenezer Erskine was the son of the Reverend Henry Erskine of Chirnside, and of Margaret

Halcro. Henry Erskine was one of the younger of thirty-three children. Margaret Halcro, his wife, was of the family of Halcro, of Halcro, in Orkney, who was a lineal descendant of Halcro, Prince of Denmark; and her great-grandmother, Lady Barbara Stewart, was the youngest daughter of the Earl of Orkney, son of James V. "But," says her biographer, "Margaret Halcro possessed a far higher distinction than the blood of nobles or kings can impart—sincere and decided piety." She died on the 14th January 1725, in her son Ebenezer's house, about a year after his marriage with Miss Mary Webster, in the seventy-eighth year of her age. She survived her husband nearly thirty years. The distinguished goodness of her sons, Ebenezer and Ralph, filled her maternal heart with joy, and seemed to compensate for the anxieties and trials of her life.

As a specimen of the difficulties with which she and her husband and their numerous family had to struggle, the following anecdote is worth relating.

When Henry Erskine resided at Dryburgh,

after his ejection from Cornhill, a village in the parish of Norham, county of Northumberland, having no regular income or means of subsistence, he and his family were occasionally in great difficulties. Their extremity, however, was usually God's opportunity of providing for them, so that neither himself nor family were ever reduced to the necessity of begging their bread. At one time, in particular, the small store was entirely exhausted. When they had supped in the evening, and the supper was a light one, there remained neither bread, meal, flesh, nor money, in the house. The children awaking early in the morning, cried for bread. The good man must have felt exceedingly for them; not having a morsel to give, and not knowing where to find a breakfast, either for the parents or the children. But his faith did not fail, and mental tranquillity remained undisturbed. With his usual cheerfulness, he did what he could to entertain his children and to encourage the sorrowing mother and himself to depend on that Providence which feeds the young ravens when they cry

for food. It is stated that he took a musical instrument, the cithern or guitar, with which he sometimes recreated himself, and began to divert them with a tune. He played and wept alternately, he being in one apartment and they in another. While he was thus engaged, they heard the sound of a horse's feet coming along by the side of the house, and immediately a country fellow knocked hard at the door, and called for some one to help him off with his load. Being asked whence he had come, and what was his errand, he informed them that he came from the Lady Reburn, with some provisions for Mr Erskine. They told him he must be mistaken, and that it was more likely to be for Mr Erskine of Shielfield, in the same place. He replied, No: he knew what he said, and he was not such a sot as they took him to be; he was sent to Mr Henry Erskine. "Come," he concluded, "help me off with my load, or else I will throw it down at the door." They therefore took it from him and brought it into the house, and having opened the sack, they found it well filled with meal, cheese, and flesh, for the re-

lief of the family. Thus he experienced the accomplishment of the promise, "Bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure;" and was mightily encouraged to rely on his heavenly Benefactor.

Philip, one of Henry Erskine's sons, choosing the clerical profession, became a clergyman of the Church of England, and after holding other situations was appointed Rector of Knaresdale, in the county of Northumberland. The state of ecclesiastical parties in that age was unhappy in the extreme. The alienation of feeling was carried to the utmost limit, even to the grave. Dr Anderson remarks, with manifest satisfaction, that Henry Erskine's remains were interred "not near the Episcopal minister's burial-ground, but in considerable separation from it." So this preference of his son Philip for the Church of England, it is not to be wondered at, met with reprehension from his brothers. Ralph wrote to him in strong terms of disapprobation. He however affectionately concludes his epistle thus: "Saluting you with all due and brotherly respect, together with your con-

sort and children, and desiring to hear from you—wishing the Lord may guide you into all truth, and bless you and yours with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, I remain, Rev. dear Brother, yours most affectionately.”

To conclude these notices of the Erskines, I only add, that Ebenezer Erskine in his last days suffered much bodily pain from a surgical operation unskilfully performed. But he exhibited a noble example of resignation and devotion to the Divine will. His daughter Mary attended him with assiduous care. During this season of acute suffering and great debility his people expressed an urgent wish to hear and see him once more. He went from his bed to the pulpit, and preached for half an hour from these words, “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” From the pulpit he returned to his bed again.

His last sermon was preached from his bed to a company assembled in his room. He there baptized a child, after discoursing on a text with which he had particularly wished to close his ministry, viz., Psal. xlviii. 14, “This

God is our God for ever and ever ; he will be our guide even unto death."

But to return to Dr Alexander Webster. The Tolbooth Church, to which Dr Webster was appointed, was that portion of St Giles, which was designated the Tolbooth, from its having been used in the reign of James VI. as a town-house, the supreme civil court being usually, and the parliament occasionally held in it. Dr Webster was minister of this church for the period of forty-seven years. His amiable and social virtues, which distinguished him at the beginning of his career, continued to increase and strengthen in this sphere of labour, where his influence became very great. His eminent abilities had scope to display themselves ; and the state of the times, and of ecclesiastical matters in particular, required men of steady principle and of talent. Many brilliant names occur at that period of the history of the Presbyterian Church—names which are destined to survive to succeeding generations. Among the men of great eminence who at that time adorned the Church of Scotland, we have

Walker, Robertson, Hunter, Erskine, Blair, and many more of Dr Webster's contemporaries and personal friends, of whom he took the lead ;—a pre-eminence readily accorded to him, from his estimable qualities, both as a churchman and a citizen. Dr John Erskine, of the Old Greyfriars Church, was his particular friend. He was the son of the well-known author of the *Institutes of the Law of Scotland*. Dr Hugh Blair, the elegant and eloquent preacher of the sublime virtues of Christianity in their most attractive form, ministered under the same roof with him, he being translated from *Lady Yester's* by the Town-Council to one of the charges of the High Church.

It may not be out of place here to introduce a word or two regarding the accomplished author of the "*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*," which still maintain a pre-eminent place in literature, while his justly-admired sermons, which have been universally read ever since they were presented to the public, shared the lot of most of our standard works. They were at first

rejected and discouraged by the publisher, with the usual wariness and characteristic caution of the trade, till Dr Samuel Johnson, to whom the MSS. were submitted, foresaw at once, by his experienced eye, their superiority, and the high place in theological literature which they were destined to hold. They have since been translated into all the European languages. King George III. and his consort, on hearing a portion of them read, were so highly pleased with their merits that an annual pension of £200 was immediately settled on their author. Dr Blair was also appointed to a professorship in the College, from which he retired in 1788, in consequence of advanced age, his pulpit duties being by that time sufficient for him. In the year 1799, after having also given up his pastoral charge, on account of his increasing years, he being past eighty, so vigorous still were his intellectual powers, that he composed and preached one of the most eloquent sermons which he ever delivered, in behalf of the Fund for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy. The

subject was, "The compassionate beneficence of the Deity."

The literary world is likewise indebted to Dr Blair for introducing the Poems of Ossian to public notice ; first, by his "Fragments of Ancient Poetry," and afterwards by setting on foot an undertaking for collecting and publishing the entire poems. He took a lively interest in the exertions of Macpherson to recover the traditional poetry of the Highlands, and his "Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian," published in 1763, was esteemed one of the finest specimens of critical composition in the English language. As to the fluctuations of opinion in regard to the authenticity of those beautiful productions, it is not worth entering upon.. The public is but a fickle friend and admirer ; very apt to be carried away by every wind of doctrine. The Emperor Napoleon was an enthusiastic admirer of those remarkable poems which Dr Blair prided himself upon making known to the world. This eminent divine died 27th December 1800, aged eighty-three. He was

buried in the Greyfriars churchyard, where a tablet, with an elegant Latin inscription, is erected to his memory. Dr Blair married his cousin, Katherine Bannatyne, daughter of the Rev. James Bannatyne, one of the ministers of Edinburgh. This lady died a few years previous to her husband. By her he had a son and a daughter. The son died in infancy, and the daughter at the age of twenty-one years.

Dr Blair thus having no family that survived him, his niece, Miss Martha Drysdale, became his representative, and resided in family with him. This lady, who had all the advantages of instruction and guardianship of her eminent kinsman, was endowed with strong and original powers of mind, improved no doubt by being trained under such auspices. Taught, as she may be said to have been, at the feet of Gamaliel, she possessed a deep and masculine knowledge of the world. Changes in politics and religious opinions she saw, without their being able to produce any wavering in her mind or principles. She had a clear and extensive knowledge of human nature, and a correct notion

of the passions by which many of these changes are brought about. She married Mr Gibson, whose family, pursuant to the deed of entail, succeeded to the estate of Riccarton. She was his second wife, and thus became the stepmother of Sir James Gibson-Craig of Riccarton and Ingliston, to whom and the rest of her husband's family she was warmly attached; and there existed a strong and reciprocal affection between her and them till the day of her death, which took place on the 7th June 1843. This venerable lady had reached the age of ninety-five years, and retained to the last hours of her life all the faculties of her mind entire. Few in this great city can look back and say, It is nearly five score years since I entered upon this state of existence; and still fewer can say, that, during the probation which has been allowed them, any great or useful undertaking has been achieved or even begun by them. But of the few whose names deserve to be held in remembrance, Mrs Gibson ought not to be forgotten. Like all remarkable characters she derived the position which she held still more from her

own vigorous intellect than from the advantages of connection, which she no doubt also possessed. She was a quick discerner of mankind, and a shrewd observer of society, and the different motives and impulses that actuate the human heart. She viewed with an enlightened and scrutinising eye the various religious and beneficent schemes that were going on in her day. But although she approved of many of them, and aided them with her good wishes and her purse, yet the peculiar object of humanity and mercy to which she devoted most of her energies, was one which had never met with any attention in Scotland, though no country seemed to want it more to be taken into consideration; and that was the subject of cruelty to animals. Mrs Gibson for many years, without much support or countenance to her laudable exertions, laboured to draw the public mind to this subject, and was not ashamed to stand boldly forth as the protectress of the brute creation, of whose harsh usage she daily witnessed abundant proofs in her native city, Edinburgh. She lived with praiseworthy fru-

gality, that she might devote the surplus of her income to this excellent object. Often she was solicited to bestow her means rather on orphan schools, or other educational purposes, to advance the poor; but her unvarying answer was, "All the religious and charitable world are devoted to these things. Everybody is interested in them, so that the poor children have many benefactors; but who among you takes care of the brutes?" Her munificent donations for annual sermons in different towns in Scotland are well known. The towns to which she gave a foundation for a yearly sermon are,—Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Perth, Glasgow, Dumfries, Dundee, and Leith; and she also devoted the sum of twenty pounds to each of the three universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, to be awarded as a prize for the best Essay on the subject of Cruelty to Animals. Two hundred pounds were placed in the hands of the Town-Council of Edinburgh for the annual sermon in that city upon the Sin of Cruelty. Some financial difficulties having subsequently occurred in the city accounts, the sum for the Edinburgh

sermon was ultimately placed by Mrs Gibson under the trusteeship of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch. Dr Chalmers, who cordially entered into her views, and thought the topic a very fitting one for the pulpit, preached the first sermon on the Sin of Cruelty to Animals in the High Church, in the year 1826.

Besides the large sums devoted to these annual sermons, the only foundations of the kind in Scotland, Mrs Gibson, at a great expense, printed and circulated tracts and books innumerable, including a handsome reprint of Dr Primatt's valuable Treatise on Cruelty to Animals, which is well worthy of perusal. The Venerable Principal Baird, and the Lord Provost Learmonth, were two of Mrs Gibson's friends, who admired her benevolent exertions, and warmly assisted and encouraged her in the prosecution of her plans.

CHAPTER V.

DR ALEXANDER WEBSTER, who had become the most popular man of his day, was much esteemed for the generosity and benevolence of his disposition, respected for his worth, and admired for his genius and talents. Amongst the innumerable schemes for the benefit of the destitute, and of suffering humanity, in all its forms of misery, which this excellent man promoted and suggested, the most conspicuous was the establishment of a Fund for the Widows of the Clergy of the Church of Scotland. His extraordinary powers of calculation secured the accuracy and success of his plan. The late Sir Harry Moncreiff thus writes of him : “ To Dr Webster’s talents and activity the public is indebted for the application of the principles, and during many of the most important years for the successful management,

of the plan for securing a provision to the widows and children of the ministers and professors in Scotland. His memory will always be preserved by the trustees and by the contributors with the highest respect and gratitude."

It was at the Assembly, 1742, that this noble scheme originated. Some inoperative measures had been recommended before ; but the merit of devising and maturing the present scheme belonged entirely to Dr Alexander Webster. A commission was assembled, and, application being made to Government, an Act of Parliament was obtained, and the Royal assent given March 2, 1744. The Act is under the head of 17th George II., and is intituled "An Act for raising and establishing a Fund for a Provision for the Widows and Children of the Ministers of the Church of Scotland, and of the Heads, Principals, and Masters of the Universities of St Andrews, Glasgow, and Edinburgh," &c. The author derives these facts from Arnot's History of Edinburgh.

The fund thus established was called "The Widows' Scheme." A happier institution has

perhaps never been formed in any country ; admirable alike for its benevolent design, solidity of principle upon which it is constructed, and the unparalleled success of the institution.

Before it was founded, ministers' widows were often reduced to the sad necessity of soliciting public charity. But now they are supported with comfort and respectability. and Dr Alexander Webster had the satisfaction to live to see an experimental proof of the justness of his own calculations.

To provide for the widows and children of the Presbyterian clergy various projects had been attempted and proved ineffectual, on account of their limited nature, or for want of a common rule and proper authority to put it in force. But Dr Webster's scheme, which was crowned with success, secured, by Parliamentary authority, a fund for an annuity to the widow of every minister, and a stock for the children of such as should leave no widow.

These were to be founded on an annual tax, payable out of their benefices, and the

interest of a capital arising from the surplus of the taxes during the earlier years of the scheme, when there would be no great burden on the fund. As the ministers who happened to die soonest would have paid least into the common stock, the provisions of widows and children were to be small at the beginning, and to bear an increasing proportion, conform to the sums subscribed by their husbands and fathers. After Dr Webster's plan was adopted by the General Assembly, and established by Parliament, some attempts at improvement or alteration were made, but a few years' experience shewed the impropriety of these variations, and obliged the General Assembly to recur to the Doctor's original plan, which proved itself to be the best, his whole calculations being founded on the most admirable solidity of principle. At the commencement of the scheme the capital was limited to £80,000, the interest of which, together with the annual rates, &c., would have been deemed enough for the annual burdens; but during thirty years' experience, and new calculations instituted by Dr Web-

ster, the General Assembly nominated him their commissioner to obtain a new statute, to allow the surplus of the annual produce to be lent out for a further raising of the capital till it should amount to £100,000. This was in Dr Webster's day. The capital stock and supplementary fund now, in 1852, according to the report of the Rev. Dr Grant, the present efficient collector, amount to £230,000, the annual income to £16,000; the greater part of it being the interest of capital, and the produce of vacant stipends, and of a tax upon the incomes of the clergy, &c.

Dr Webster was not a member of Assembly that year the Widows' Scheme originated, viz., 1742; but in order to give him an opportunity of stating and explaining his views, a special meeting of the Committee on Overtures was appointed to be held on the evening of Saturday, May 8th, "for receiving any schemes or proposals that may be offered for raising a fund for the widows of ministers," &c.

Dr Webster afterwards received the "thanks of the Assembly for the extraordinary pains

and trouble taken by him in the rise and progress of the scheme." Those interested in the history of facts connected with this matter can see a full account of it in the "Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland." But probably the brief sketch here given of it is all that the general reader would care for.


Dr Webster's opinion in all ecclesiastical matters was held in great deference. The stability and prosperity of the National Church depended much upon judicious and wise measures, at a time when the country was agitated by factions. An application to the Legislature for an increase to the stipends of the clergy was proposed, which, however necessary or reasonable it might be, was not well judged, under existing circumstances, when, friendly as the king and rulers were to the Scottish Establishment, which had warmly supported the Hanoverian line, yet unanimity throughout the country, as to the expediency of such a measure, was not to be expected nor hoped for. The Earl of Marchmont, who was one of Pope's executors, and the friend of

Bolingbroke, on succeeding to the earldom, retired of course from the House of Commons, and not being elected a representative peer, displayed his peculiar eloquence in the General Assembly, where he sat as an elder from the presbytery of Dunse. As to his qualifications for this office we do not judge, but his characteristic speech on the subject of the proposed augmentation of stipends is curious. He is much opposed to the measure, as one calculated to hurt the interests of the Church, and Dr Webster's judgment in the matter is as usual referred to, and Lord Marchmont quotes that "learned divine's" opinion as being just and wise; and in perfect unison with his own.

Dr Webster possessed great firmness and intrepidity of character, and he manifested his fidelity to the House of Hanover at a political period, when most other men in his situation would have sought safety in silence or retirement. Nor was his genius, his clear judgment, and his excellent taste, recognised only in matters connected with clerical business. His talents were so highly appreciated

that he was applied to in many secular affairs, and he was uniformly consulted by the magistrates in all public undertakings. He planned the New Town of Edinburgh, and even the places of public amusement. And thus, while his native city is indebted to his plans for its modern adornments, the country at large owes to him many of the schemes for its mental and religious improvement. Indeed, the utility of his talents, and the dignity of his character were universally acknowledged. It is not to be wondered at that his company was eagerly sought. His house was the resort of the *elite* of the land. His vast knowledge, and his brilliant conversational powers rendered his society profitable and fascinating. Dr Samuel Johnson was a frequent guest at the table of this celebrated divine, who was Johnson's special friend and adviser during his visit to Scotland.

Amidst all Dr Webster's elaborate undertakings he bent his gigantic mind to the lighter accomplishments of life. He wrote poetry of great beauty and elegance, and to him we are indebted for several patriotic songs. "For the



lack of gold she has left me" is a production of his.

Dr Webster married Mary Erskine, a young lady of fortune, daughter of Colonel John Erskine, the brother of Sir Charles Erskine of Alva, and of Euphemia Cochrane, daughter of William Cochrane of Ochiltree, and granddaughter of the Earl of Dundonald. Dr Webster's acquaintance with this young lady commenced during his residence at Culross, and his marriage was celebrated a few days after his induction to the Tolbooth Church in Edinburgh, 1737. Mary Erskine was courted by some of the first peers of the realm, but she declared her preference for Alexander Webster, in the manner which has been thus recorded: He had been employed by a friend to bespeak the favour of Miss Erskine, and for this purpose paid frequent visits to the house of Valleyfield, where she resided. He urged the suit of his friend with great eloquence and sincerity, but his own fine figure, high accomplishments, and elegant demeanour, prepossessed the young lady; and, disregarding his solicitations for his friend, she at length

replied, with grace and modesty, "Had you spoken as well for yourself, you would have succeeded better?" This union was a remarkably happy one. She was in every way worthy of his regards, and his affection for her never suffered the slightest diminution.

He expressed the ardour of that attachment, which never abated, in a fine lyric, which was first published in the Scots Magazine, 1747.

" When I see thee I love thee, but hearing adore ;
I wonder, and think you a woman no more."

With the fire of a poet, and the manners and accomplishments of a man of the world, Dr Webster possessed the fervour and piety of a truly evangelical divine. The harmony of his voice, the nobleness of his figure, the dignity of his aspect, and the rapture of his eye, conveyed, we are told, "an electric impression of the fervent devotion which animated his soul." In prayer and sacramental addresses his manner was particularly noble and sublime. A powerful diction, and masterly command of his subject, characterised the irresistible and entrancing eloquence of his

sermons ; and, ever attentive to the circumstances of his audience, he somewhat lowered his diction to suit the capacity of his hearers, that all might be profited by his instructions. To the best qualities of a clergyman he added an enlightened and patriotic zeal for the true interests of his country and the Church, the welfare of which cannot be disjoined. He was jealous of corruption, and hated an unsound policy, that actuates many who attempt, by undue means, to gain a particular purpose. This integrity of heart and firmness of character might sometimes expose him to censures and calumny from the guilty, but secured to him the unbounded esteem of all those who could appreciate true independence of soul and nobleness of character. An anonymous biographer thus writes of him :—
“ Nature had endowed him with strong faculties, which a very considerable share of learning had matured and improved. For extent of comprehension, depth of thinking, and accuracy in the profoundest researches, he stood unrivalled. In the knowledge of the world and of human nature he was a master.

It is not wonderful that the best societies of the kingdom were perpetually anxious to possess a man who knew how to soften the rancour of public theological contest with the liberality and manners of a gentleman. His address was engaging; his wit strong as his mind; his convivial powers, as they are called, enchanting."

It would not be possible to enumerate all the charitable and beneficent undertakings and plans of public utility, whether of a permanent or temporary nature, in which he was engaged. He was a zealous promoter of the Association for the Civilization of the Highlands, and the Propagation of the Gospel there. In 1753 he published a sermon on that subject entitled, "Zeal for the Civil and Religious Interests of Mankind recommended."

The Royal bounty "For the Reformation of the Highlands and Islands" was first given by George I. in 1725, and has since been annually renewed. It was at first £1000 a-year, but George IV. increased it to £2000.

It was in the year 1755 that, at the desire of the Lord President Dundas, Dr Webster

drew up for the information and service of Government a census of the people of Scotland, the first that had been made in the kingdom; and his well-known character for accuracy, and the extraordinary powers which he possessed of mathematical calculation, rendered him peculiarly well fitted for the undertaking.

Thus the country at large was indebted to him for his indefatigable labours. It was his constant aim to advance the interests of his fellowmen, and he closed his eminently useful life, peacefully and serenely, at the advanced age of seventy-seven years. After a short illness, he entered into his rest on Sunday the 25th January 1784. This valuable minister, and much respected man, obtained his frequent prayer—"a peaceful and an easy death."

He had the pleasure of seeing many of his benevolent designs arrive at maturity and established with success. He preserved to the last that vigour of mind and activity of body which characterised him throughout life; and laborious as his life had been for the best

interests of mankind, he ceased from those labours, and entered upon the eternal sabbath, trusting alone in the finished work of the Redeemer, whose cause it was his delight to advance in the church and in the world.

By his wife, who had predeceased him on the 28th November 1766, Dr Webster had six sons and a daughter. One of his sons, Colonel Webster, fell in the American war.

Dr Webster's figure was dignified and commanding, his countenance striking and noble, highly characteristic of his elevated mind. A portrait of him by David Martin is to be seen in the hall of the Ministers' Widows' Fund. It is recorded to his honour, that the large income which Mrs Webster's fortune placed at his command was expended with unwonted bounty and judicious liberality in the relief of those who were in limited circumstances. He freely bestowed on the needy what Divine Providence had placed at his disposal, and thus proved himself, not in theory only, but in reality, the friend and benefactor of the poor, and a faithful steward of that which was committed to him.

Although it may seem a reduplication of what has already been said, we shall extract from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* an article regarding this eminent man.

“ Alexander Webster, D.D., was the son of James Webster, minister of the Tolbooth Church in Edinburgh, and was born in that city about the year 1707. He was only thirteen years of age at the death of his father, and of course could derive little from parental instruction or example. He studied, at the University of Edinburgh, the several branches of learning with great approbation, particularly those connected with the mathematics, for which he discovered an early predilection. He afterwards attended the lectures of the professor of divinity; and in the year 1733 he was ordained minister of the parish of Culross, and in June 1737 he was admitted as one of the ministers of the Tolbooth Church of Edinburgh. His eloquence was noble and manly, his piety conspicuous, and the discharge of his pastoral duties faithful and laborious. To these qualities he added an enlightened zeal for the external interests of the

Church, a jealousy of corruption, a hatred of false politics and tyrannical measures, which sometimes exposed him to calumny from the guilty, but secured him the esteem of all who could value independence of soul and integrity of heart.

“The prosperity of fortune which placed Mr Webster in the church of his father, and restored him to the polished society of his native city, was not confined to these favours. Eleven days after his settlement in Edinburgh, he obtained the hand of Mary Erskine, a young lady of considerable fortune, and nearly related to the noble family of Dundonald. The genius of Mr Webster now began to unfold itself. Family connections extended his acquaintance with the nobility. Edinburgh then possessed a number of men, both in civil and ecclesiastical stations, who have saved or adorned their country. With these he was soon to co-operate in defending the Protestant interests from the arms and artifices of rebellion.

“In the year 1733 five or six ministers seceded from the Church ; and being anxious to

draw away as many as possible from the communion which they had renounced, they invited down to Scotland, in 1741, George Whitefield, a young preacher of great piety and extraordinary pulpit talents. On his way to Dunfermline, he was met and entertained at Edinburgh by Mr Webster and some of his brethren. From them he learned the state of church parties in Scotland; and though he kept his promise of preaching first in Fife, he declined connecting himself with any particular sect. Disappointed of his influence and assistance, the Seceders ascribed the effects of his preaching to sorcery and the devil, while Webster, in a pamphlet which he published on the occasion, attributed them to the influence of the Holy Spirit, an opinion regarded by the Seceders as unspeakable wickedness.

“In the year 1745 Webster remained in the city when it was taken by the rebels, and employed his universal popularity and vigorous eloquence in retaining the minds of the people in the interests of the House of Hanover. His exertions in this were not over-

looked by most of the spirited gentlemen who acted in quelling the rebellion. He became an intimate friend of Duncan Forbes of Cul-loden, Lord Milton, and others. He preserved to the latest period of his career that activity both of mind and body which distinguished him in the prime of life, obtaining at last his frequent wish and prayer, an easy and peaceful death, after a very short indisposition, on the 25th of January 1784.

“ Dr Webster’s character as a minister was popular in the extreme. To the poor he was a father and a friend, a liberal patron to poor students. In his person he was tall, and of a thin and meagre habit. His features were strongly marked, and the conformity of the whole indicated genius and independence. To him the widows of the clergy are indebted for the establishment of the celebrated scheme, securing them in an annuity proportioned to certain rates of payment; the plan of which he matured in his own mind soon after he was appointed a minister of the Tolbooth Church. The success of the scheme has been complete.”

The following account of Dr Webster we extract from the "Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland," and although there may be in several parts a repetition of what has been already stated, yet it is deemed best to lay it before the reader, as corroborative of the truth of the narrative, from the testimony of various writers.

"Dr Alexander Webster was the son of the Rev. James Webster, minister of the Tolbooth Church in Edinburgh, and born in that city about the year 1707. His father was descended of an ancient family in Fife, and educated in the University of St Andrews. His bright natural abilities, and rapid progress in the literature of those days, were not more conspicuous than a fervent early piety, and warm zeal for the Presbyterian Church government and forms of worship. St Andrews was then the first seminary of learning in Scotland, and the seat of an Archbishop. But the generality of the nation, and particularly those who had any correct notions of civil and religious liberty, detested the perfidy of the man who had sold the interests of his native

Church for the splendour of a mitre. James Webster incurred the resentment of Archbishop Sharpe, and was obliged to fly from college, in his *magistrand* year, without a degree. He associated himself with that party which had all along refused to abjure the Covenant, accept the Episcopal establishment, or acknowledge, as their sovereign, the king who had imposed it on the nation. Consequently he underwent the persecution of the nonjurant clergy. He was apprehended and imprisoned for eighteen months in Dundee, in a place obviously intended for condemned malefactors, by which his constitution was broken, and his health rendered infirm and precarious.

“He was soon after licensed to preach by the wandering votaries of presbytery; and again confined in a dungeon in Dumfries, whence he was probably liberated by King James’s Act of Toleration.

“The designs of government were at last clearly understood. The voice of reason, of freedom, and religion, expelled the ancient family of Stuart from a throne which, for many ages, it had possessed under the shadow

of divine right. Presbytery was instantly re-established in Scotland, according to the wishes of the nation. James Webster was ordained minister, first at Liberton, near Edinburgh, then at Whitekirk, and lastly, about the year 1693, in the Tolbooth Church in the city, where he remained nearly twenty-seven years, and died on the 17th day of May 1720. His funeral was attended by a vast concourse of people, and many of the members of the General Assembly of the Church, then sitting. As he was extremely popular, he was generally and deeply lamented. Many elegies were composed in honour of his memory, which shew, at the same time, the rude state of Scottish taste in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

“ His son, Alexander, was only thirteen years of age at the death of his father ; and, consequently, could derive little from parental instruction or example. It was expected, however, that he would resemble him in piety, abilities, and zeal for religion ; and the people were not deceived. He studied, at the University of Edinburgh, the several branches of

college learning, with great approbation, particularly those connected with the mathematics, for which he shewed an early predilection. He afterwards attended the lectures of the professor of divinity in that University; but it is not certain whether he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Edinburgh. A Minute appears in the Records of the Presbytery, in the year 1732, mentioning a certificate and testimonial, granted in the usual form, to Alexander Webster, *student* in divinity.

“ In the year 1733 Mr Webster was ordained minister of the Gospel in the parish of Culross, in the Presbytery of Dunfermline. His first appearance, as a preacher, was uncommonly flattering. His eloquence was noble and manly; his piety conspicuous; his discharge of all the duties of the pastoral office faithful and laborious. To these essential qualities of a clergyman, he added an ardent, but enlightened zeal for the external interests of the Church, a jealousy of corruption, a hatred of false politics and tyrannical measures, which sometimes exposed him to ca-

lunny from the guilty, but secured him the unbounded esteem of all who could value independence of soul and integrity of heart.

“A double portion of the popularity of the father now rested on the son. The congregation of the Tolbooth Church beheld, with delight, the hopes of former times completely realised, and by a unanimous call elected Mr Webster their minister, in the place of the Rev. John Taylor, deceased. Mr Webster was accordingly ordained 2d June 1737. Mr Robert Wallace of the Tron Church, who had been brought into the city in the same year with the father of the celebrated Dr William Robertson (August 29, 1733), preached the ordination sermon from Dan. iii. 3.

“The prosperity of fortune which placed Mr Webster in his father’s church, and restored him to the literary and polished society of his native city, was not confined to these favours. Eleven days after his settlement in Edinburgh, he obtained the hand of Mary Erskine, a young lady of considerable fortune, and nearly related to the noble family of Dundonald. As Mr Webster was minister at Culross, and the

lady resided at Valleyfield, in Fifeshire, it is probable that the marriage was arranged before his preferment. He is said to have been at first employed by a gentleman of his acquaintance to gain Miss Erskine for an absent lover. The suit of that lover he urged with uncommon eloquence, and received a complete refusal, to which the lady *naively* added, "Had you spoken as well for yourself, perhaps you might have succeeded better." The hint was too obvious to be mistaken. Few could have resisted an invitation which was evidently prompted by the contempt of a man who could entertain the frigid idea of making love by proxy. The marriage was hastily celebrated, and some verses of great beauty and feeling are said to have been produced on the occasion.

"The genius of Mr Webster now began to unfold itself. Family connections extended his acquaintance with the nobility. Edinburgh, at that period, possessed a number of men, both in civil and ecclesiastical stations, who had served or adorned their country. With these, he was soon to co-operate in defending

the Protestant interests, both civil and religious, from the arms and artifices of rebellion.

“In the year 1733, five or six ministers seceded from the National Church, on real or pretended grounds of corruption in that establishment. Anxious to draw away as many people as possible from the communion which they had renounced, they, in the year 1741, invited down to Scotland, Mr George Whitefield, a young English preacher of great piety, and extraordinary pulpit abilities. Mr Whitefield, on his journey to Dunfermline, one of the principal abodes of the Secession, was met and entertained at Edinburgh by Mr Webster and some of his brethren. From them he learned the state of church prejudices and parties in Scotland, and though he kept his promise of preaching first in Fife, he openly refused to connect himself with any particular sect. The astonishing effects of Mr Whitefield's preaching were accordingly ascribed by the Seceders to a very different cause from what was generally supposed. Mr Webster had an opportunity of viewing these effects in their amplest extent at Cambuslang, near

Glasgow, about the middle of February 1742; and convinced, not more by the extraordinary impressions which that celebrated gospel orator made on his audience, than by the future lives of many that were present, he wrote a small pamphlet, ascribing the cause of their conversion to the influence of the Holy Spirit. This account of the matter was strangely contrasted with that of the Secession, who imputed the whole to sorcery and the devil, excluded from the communion table those who maintained the contrary, and held a solemn fast for the unspeakable wickedness going on in the land.

“During these exertions in the cause of practical religion, Mr Webster was not forgetful of works of benevolence and mercy. His natural abilities, as a profound calculator, he had now improved by a diligent attention to the mathematical chances of human life, as founded on the best printed accounts of population, the history of annuities, and careful observation of the state of particular parishes. This information he resolved to apply to a benevolent purpose, in the execution of which,

perseverance was not less requisite than intellect.

“The Scottish clergy, at the Reformation, obtained for the support of themselves and the new establishment, a very scanty portion of the revenues of the ancient Church. The rapacity of the nobles and crown seized on the rest, and promoted the interests of religion and liberty from motives that scarcely acknowledge the shadow of virtue. The clergy were, however, content with their conduct; many of that body being as austere and simple in their lives as the most recluse *religieux*. As they were mostly of plebeian origin, and ignorant of the luxury of the better sort, they easily submitted to a poverty which was not to them privation. The consequence of this was, that while Scotland remained without trade, and without improvement, they experienced no difficulty. When the kingdom began to advance in both the forementioned respects, the nominal value of money changed, and the ministers of the several parishes were reduced to indigence. What they received from the Exchequer or teind-lands was not

sufficient to support their families, much less provide for these after their death. Their widows and children were commonly left destitute of every resource,—a situation the more distressful, as it was often novel to the sufferers.

“ Mr Webster matured his scheme of a perpetual fund to relieve these contingencies, soon after his settlement in Edinburgh. From an accurate list of the ministers of the Church, and the members of the three Southern Universities, compared with the ordinary ratio of births, marriages, and deaths, in this and other kingdoms, he was enabled to fix on a series of rates to be paid annually by the members of these two departments, the amount of which rates was to supply a specific annuity to every widow whose husband should be a contributor, and a proportional sum for the children of the same. To forward this scheme, he opened a correspondence with the different presbyteries in the kingdom ; and, in the year 1742, received for it the sanction of the General Assembly of the Church, which, after suitable examination, approved of the whole plan, with

the exception of a few immaterial particulars. Accordingly, the several presbyteries and universities concurred with the Assembly in petitioning Parliament for the act, enabling them to raise and establish the fund, and obliging the ministers of the Church, with the heads, principals, and masters of St Andrews, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, to pay annually, each according to his option, one of the following rates, viz., £2, 12s. 6d.; £3, 18s. 9d.; £5, 5s., or £6, 11s. 3d.; to be repaid in proportional annuities of £10, £15, £20, or £25, to their widows, or in similar provisions of £100, £150, £200, or £250, to their children. The act was obtained in terms of the petition (17th Geo. II.), with liberty to employ the surplus of the annual payments and expenses in loans of £30 a-piece among the contributors, and put out the remainder at interest, on proper security. A second act, amending the former, was procured in the 22d year of the same reign (1748), regulating the several parts of the management, and granting liberty to raise the capital to £80,000, including the sums lent to contributors. The commencement of the fund is reckoned from

the 25th of March 1744. In the year 1770 a new Act of Parliament, procured by advice of Dr Webster, prescribed the full form, in which the fund is at present conducted. The loans granted to contributors were discontinued, as prejudicial to the parties concerned; liberty was granted to extend the capital to £100,000; the methods of recovering payments, the nomination and duties of trustees; the salaries of the collector and clerk; in short, the whole economy of the institution, were fixed and determined. A tax on the marriage of each contributor, amounting to one year's annual rate of his particular option; and, if he were forty years of age at his accession to his benefice, and had children, the sum of two years and a-half of his rate, besides his ordinary dues and marriage, were added to the revenues. Further, a sum of half his particular rate was declared due to the fund, out of the *ann.*; or, in case of its not falling, out of his real or personal estate, on the death of a minister; and patrons were assessed in the sum of £3, 2s., for every half-year's vacancy.

“ A report of the state of the fund was ordered to be made annually to the General Assembly by the trustees, and this afterwards to be printed.

“ Dr Webster, in the year 1748, had finished a series of calculations, in which he not only ascertained the probable number of ministers that would die annually, of widows and children that would be left, of annuitants drawing whole or half annuities, and the medium of the annuities and annual rates, but also the different annual states of the fund, in its progress to completing the capital stock. These calculations have approached the fact with astonishing precision. On the 22d of November 1799, in the fifty-sixth year of the fund, and the year which completed the capital stock fixed by Act of Parliament, Dr Webster's calculations, after having approached the truth for a long series of years with surprising accuracy, stood in the following manner: The stock and surplus for that year were £105,504, 2s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., and the calculated stock was £86,448, 12s. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.; consequently, the difference was £19,055, 10s. 0 $\frac{7}{8}$ d.

“Such was the progress of the most benevolent institution which Scotland has ever established. The infant scheme had scarcely commenced when Mr Webster was called upon to take an interest in an event which, had it succeeded according to the wishes of one of the parties concerned, would probably have again banished presbytery to the mountains. This was the attempt of the House of Stuart in 1745 to recover its ancient kingdoms. Mr Webster was remarkable for his hatred and open censure of vice in all parties. In the year 1740 he preached a sermon at the election of the city magistrates, on the character and fate of Haman, in which a great and very corrupt minister of the state (Sir Robert Walpole) was so clearly alluded to, and the corruption of his politics so strongly exposed, that it has even been reprinted to serve the purpose of perpetual censure.

“In the year 1745, Mr Webster remained in the city when it was taken by the rebels, and employed his universal popularity and vigorous eloquence in retaining the minds of the people in the interests of the House of Hanover.

His exertions in this particular were not overlooked by the spirited gentlemen who acted in quelling the rebellion. He became an intimate friend of Duncan Forbes of Culloden, Lord Milton, Preston of Valleyfield, the Dundasses of Arniston ; and, in short, of every patriotic name, about or within the city.

“ On the 23d of June 1746, the day appointed by the General Assembly for a thanksgiving for the victory of Culloden, he preached the longest of all his printed sermons. The passage of Scripture was Esther viii. 17, which, with his usual facility of adaptation, he applied to the general professions of loyalty *then* made by the Tory party throughout the kingdom. He compared the new-born zeal of this party to that of the heathens in the Persian empire ; who, awed by the influence of the Jews at court, made an external profession of Judaism. This discourse is entirely a history of the successive events of the rebellion, delivered, in strong, animated, and impressive language, with appropriate comments on the cruelty of the rebel chiefs, and dark masterly sketches of the effects of Popery.

The parallel between the heathens and Tories, the Jews and the loyal party, is generally kept in view by occasional recurrence to the context ; yet, the author thought proper to desert the subject for a considerable time, to pronounce, with all the ardour of patriotism, a eulogium of the King, the Duke of Cumberland, the Earl of Leven, the Duke of Argyle, President Forbes, and several others of the loyalists.

“ Mr Webster was now equally caressed by the people, the government, and the nobility. His great talents, as a deviser of new schemes and improvements in the city of Edinburgh, and the kingdom at large, joined to the unerring accuracy of his calculations, soon rendered him a necessary attendant at all meetings where public or private good was to be projected. He entered with enthusiasm into the plan of civilising and propagating the Gospel in the Highlands. Most of the measures were either concerted or amended by himself. He was the intimate friend of Provost George Drummond, to whom Edinburgh is indebted for a new city, and the poor and

destitute for an asylum. In the year 1755 he drew up, at the desire of President Dundas, for the information and service of Government, an account of the number of people in Scotland. This he was enabled to do by a general correspondence which he had opened in 1743, both with clergy and laity, for the purposes of the fund. ‘Dr Webster’s well-known character for accuracy,’ says the honourable and patriotic Baronet who drew up the Statistical Account of Scotland, ‘and the success with which his calculations have been uniformly attended, ought to satisfy every one that the report he drew up may be safely relied upon.’ In the year 1754 he published a sermon, preached at the opening of the General Assembly in that year, entitled ‘Zeal for the Civil and Religious Interests of Mankind Recommended.’ In this discourse, he mentions with great warmth and eloquence, the Royal exertions for the improvement of the North, and points out the various branches of a duty which, during his whole life, was ever nearest his heart.

“Our limits will not allow us, nor our in-

formation suffice to enumerate, all the charitable institutions or projects of public welfare, temporary or lasting, in which Dr Webster was engaged. As he lived to an advanced age, he had the pleasure of seeing many of them arrive at their maturity of usefulness, and of receiving the blessings of the widow and orphan—the noblest reward of living merit. He persevered, to the latest period of his course, in that activity, both of mind and body, which distinguished him in the prime of life; and ripe, like the sheaf in autumn, obtained his frequent wish and prayer, an easy and peaceful death, after a very short indisposition, on Sunday the 25th of January 1784, aged seventy-six. In a few days after, his remains were deposited in the Greyfriars' Churchyard, in that common mass, where the ashes of Buchanan, Robertson, and Black, with those of many other illustrious dead, are lost among vulgar dust, without a monument or a name. His grave was for some time inclosed with wood; and a project of a monument to his memory was moved in the General

Assembly, which, not much to the honour of the country, has not been executed.

“ Mary Erskine, Dr Webster’s only wife, died on the 28th day of November 1766. By her he had seven children alive in the year 1759, the year in which their names and dates of birth were entered in the register of the presbytery, kept for the Widows’ Fund, and attested by himself. Of six sons, only the eldest, Major Webster, is now alive (1802). One of them, Colonel Webster, fell gallantly fighting in the service of his country, in the contest with America. His only daughter, Anne, was married to a Captain Mingo, and is now dead also. ~

“ To give a complete character of Dr Webster, is almost beyond the power of writing. Nature had endowed him at his birth with strong and gigantic faculties, which a very considerable share of learning had matured and improved. For extent of comprehension, depth of thinking, and accuracy in the profoundest researches, he stood unrivalled. In the knowledge of the world, and of human

nature, he was a master. It was not wonderful that the best societies in the kingdom were perpetually anxious to possess a man who knew how to soften the rancour of public theological contest with the liberality and manners of a gentleman. His address was engaging; his wit strong as his mind; his convivial powers, as they are called, enchanting.

“As a minister of the everlasting gospel, his character was popular in the extreme. His voice was harmonious, his figure noble; the dignity of his look, the rapture of his eye, conveyed an electric impression of the fervent devotion which engrossed his soul. In prayer, and in sacramental addresses, his manner was particularly noble and august. The style of his preaching was deeply evangelical; his language strong and animated, rather than polished, and somewhat lowered to the capacity of his hearers, to whose situation in life he always was attentive. His church was crowded by the common people, who ran in multitudes to hear a minister, who preached the great doctrines of religion without cor-

ruption, as they are found in the Word of God.

“To the poor Dr Webster was a father and a friend. To mention his name is to mention charity itself. He was a liberal patron of poor theological students; the spark of genius, and the bud of piety he cherished, wherever he found them, without vanity or ostentation. As a husband, father, and head of a family, his heart was naturally too good, his feelings too strong, and his sense of religion too great, to be in any respect habitually deficient.

“His political sentiments, both civil and ecclesiastical, were those of a Whig, firm, independent, manly, and constitutional. He was jealous of corruption and error, and expressed his unqualified censure of both with equal spirit and abhorrence. Popular in the extreme himself, he highly disapproved of the conduct of those ministers, who, when forced upon a congregation, neglect to cultivate the acquaintance of its members; and, by either preaching not evangelically, or above the capacity of the audience, scatter it up and down among the different sectaries. His particular

share in the government of the Church was accordingly managed for the interests of the people.

“ In his person Dr Webster was tall, of a thin and meagre habit. The several features of his face were strongly marked ; the conformation of the whole indicated genius and independence. The dignity of his eye, and the natural grandeur of his look, were never employed to intimidate the poor or the humble. He was affable to all, liberal both of his money and of his interest ; accessible to the voice of distress, under whatever form. Towards the end of his life he stooped much, under the pressure of age. During the long period of seventy-six years he maintained a uniform reputation as a man, a patriot, and a minister ; and the effects of his genius and benevolence will record his memory in the breast of the widow and the orphan as long (to use the animated language of his funeral eulogium) as a university shall flourish, or the vestige of a church shall be seen in his native land.

“ On the Sabbath after Dr Webster’s death a funeral sermon was preached by his col-

league, Dr Gloag, from John xi. 11, ‘ Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.’ The peroration was as follows :—

“ ‘ You, my friends of this congregation, have no doubt anticipated me already in the further prosecution of this subject, and prevented me in the application I intend to make of it to the character of your late most valuable and worthy pastor, whose death you are now lamenting. I sincerely pity and feel for you on this melancholy occasion ; I could even mingle my tears with yours, as I have but too great reason to join with you in your grief, when I consider the many endearing obligations I received from his peculiar attention and regard to myself. He was the first who introduced me to public life ; and from that period till the day of his death he honoured me with a steady, invariable, and most affectionate friendship. His memory will therefore be always dear to me ; gratitude calls on me to speak in his praise, while at the same time I must acknowledge with regret, how unequal I am to the painful task which has fallen to my lot this day. They who best knew his

eminent distinguished worth will not hesitate to confess, that to do full justice to his character would require a genius as great, a mind as comprehensive, and a tongue as eloquent, as his own. The sincerity, however, of my affection to him, and the purity of my intention, will compensate, I hope, in some measure, for the imperfections of the present attempt to do honour to his memory. Where, then, shall I begin? or in what point of light shall I endeavour to represent his most instructive and useful character?

“ ‘Shall I desire you first to behold him in the dear relation of a kind and indulgent father, loving and beloved, by his children? Alas! the very mention of the name may perhaps irritate those feelings which, I fear, are but too painful already by the sudden and unexpected shock they have received.

“ ‘Consider him next, if you please, as a minister of the gospel of the Son of God, leading the public devotions of his people, and admonishing, instructing, and comforting them from his holy word. Think on the humility, the earnestness, and the fervour of his prayers,

when he poured out his very soul to God on our behalf, from the place where I now stand; think on the solemnity with which he delivered the message of his great Master, and the concern of spirit with which he besought sinners to be reconciled to God; think on the tender, affectionate, and most encouraging manner in which he addressed the desponding mind, and the sorrowful heart; and then say, if he did not “watch for your souls, like one that must give an account.”

“Follow him next to a communion table, holding in his hands the sacramental pledges of the broken body and shed blood of the Redeemer, and, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, setting them apart from a common to a sacred use—say, for you know it well, did he ever appear in so grand and august an attitude as on that solemn occasion? Did not his manner, his voice, his countenance, his every feature, shew the intense devotion of his heart? Difficult it was to tell, whether admiration or gratitude, or love or joy, or humility and contrition of spirit, did then most prevail; or if his soul

felt the happy influence of all these gracious affections acting in concert and harmony together. One would have thought, that on such a solemn occasion his faith was elevated to an uncommon degree, and permitted to take a view of the glory of the great Immanuel himself within the veil.

“ ‘The heart, you may believe, that was so full of devotion to God could not be destitute of love and charity to men. Consider him, then, as an advocate in the cause of liberty, as a friend to the sacred rights of conscience, and the exercise of private judgment in matters of religion. Here he made a noble and most amiable figure, displaying at once the quickness of his apprehension, the solidity and strength of his understanding; and the extensive candour and benevolence of his heart. He allowed, with great propriety, to others the same privilege he claimed and exercised in his own conduct,—the privilege of thinking and judging for themselves in the discussion of every question wherein God and religion were concerned. No haughty forbidding airs of superiority did he assume; his

sentiments he delivered with an easy freedom, great temper and moderation of spirit, paying a becoming deference to those who held opinions different from his own; and when the debate was closed, he treated even his keenest antagonists with all the complaisance and agreeable manners of the polite and accomplished gentleman.

“ ‘If you imagine, that the man who was so well qualified to shine in public was inattentive to the concerns of private life, you must be strangers indeed to his character. He was a friend to the poor. He heard their complaints with the affection of a man, and relieved their wants with the generosity of a prince. Well did they know, for they knew it from experience, that his hand was as ready to give as his heart was to devise liberal things.

“ ‘From this beautiful part of his character let me lead your attention to another, in which he appeared in a truly amiable and conspicuous light. You will easily perceive, that I now refer to the most ingenious, useful, and justly admired scheme, which the God of all wisdom and grace enabled him to contrive

and accomplish, for the support of the widows and children of all the ministers of the Church, and for the support also of the widows and children of all the principals and professors of the four learned universities of Scotland. This is a scheme of such invention, labour, excellence, and real utility, as surpasseth all praise, and will transmit the name of your late worthy pastor, with distinguished honour and respect, to the latest posterity. Suffice it only to say of it in general, that it is founded on the best principles of calculation, and a thorough knowledge of human life; and during the time that it pleased the Sovereign Disposer of all events to allow its most ingenious author to remain with us, to superintend and direct its progress, it was put to such a full and satisfactory proof, that, under the care and providence of God, it will continue to be a sure and lasting fund of relief to the widow and the fatherless, so long as a university shall flourish, or the vestige of a church shall be seen in our native land. Many a time hath your late pastor, by means of this most benevolent scheme, “delivered

the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him; and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." Numbers already gone have praised the Lord on his account; and thousands yet unborn will rise up, and bless the great Father of the fatherless, and the Husband of the widow, for giving them such a kind and tried friend,—such a humane, generous, and unwearied benefactor, as they found in the great and good man whose death we are this day lamenting. Thus you see how he lived; he lived to his God and to his country, with much honour and credit to himself, and great benefit to society; and at last, according to his own *wish* and *prayer* (if my information be good, and I have reason to believe it to be good), he was blessed with an *easy* and a *peaceful death*, and carried to the end of his journey through life, in a good old age, "like as a shock of corn cometh in his season." On the morning of the last sabbath, while we were assembling for the worship of God in his courts below, his precious spirit was called to

the temple above, to keep an endless sabbath with his God and Father in heaven ; and his body was left to rest in the grave, in hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life.'

" Dr Webster received the degree of doctor in divinity in the year 1760, when about to proceed to London, as one of the deputation sent to address George III. on his accession. In 1772 he succeeded Mr James Stewart as collector of the Widows' Fund, a situation to which he was well entitled.'"*

Alexander Earl of Leven and Melville, the head of a family whose history is closely connected with that of Presbytery, was Commissioner from the year 1741 to 1753. He was married to Mary Erskine of Carnock, the aunt of Dr John Erskine of the Greyfriars. This nobleman took a deep and active interest in the affairs of the Church. His address to the Assembly in 1753 contained some remarks referring to the deposition of Mr Gillespie, who had departed from the rules of the Establish-

* Annals of the General Assembly.

ment, by joining some dissenting bodies, in connection with Dr Doddridge and others.

Dr Webster's conduct was usually a precedent in all church matters. It had been the practice of both the Commissioners and Moderators to give in their speeches in writing, that they might be engrossed in the Record; but Dr Webster set the example (which was soon generally followed) of withholding a copy of his concluding address. We have embodied however, in the notice of Lord Leven, his reply to that nobleman at the opening of the Assembly. The following is the Moderator, Dr Webster's rejoinder referred to; "which rejoinder," says the compiler of the Annals of the General Assembly, "we shall give the more readily, as no record has been preserved of his address at the close."

"May it please your Grace! when now assembled, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the countenance and protection of lawful authority, it becomes us to remember, with humble thankfulness, the many instances of Divine goodness towards this Church since the glorious Revolution, and to consider the

happy accession of the present Royal Family to the crown of these realms, as the great mean, under God, of the multiplied blessings we this day enjoy. We should be of all men the most ungrateful, if the distinguished proofs and renewed assurances which we have received of His Majesty's paternal care and concern, did not warm our hearts with every loyal and every dutiful sentiment. We feel, but want words to express, what gratitude and thankfulness become the subjects of such a Sovereign. The good opinion which your Grace is pleased to entertain of the members of this House, gives us the most sensible pleasure ; and we trust, *by a steady adherence to the laws of the Great King and Head of this Church,* and a due attention *to the nature of our happy constitution,* to manage the important affairs which may come before us, in such a manner as shall satisfy your Grace, and convince the world that no society, no assembly, can have the true honour, the real interest and welfare of this Church more at heart. We hope to make it appear,—enemies themselves being judges,—that we may justly claim the cha-

racter of those who pray for the peace, and wish well to the prosperity of Zion.

“His Majesty’s liberal donation for maintaining itinerant preachers and catechists in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, we accept with all thankfulness, and shall endeavour to employ the same in the best manner for instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the vicious, and bringing the disaffected to a just sense of their great happiness under His Majesty’s auspicious reign. What your Grace has been pleased to recommend on this occasion deserves the highest regard; and we should indeed be greatly wanting to ourselves, as well as undutiful to the best of kings, if not solicitous to suppress the first risings of sedition and rebellion. The dreadful ruin which of late threatened every thing dear to us as men and Christians, the enemies which still lurk in our bosom, and the restless endeavours of surrounding foes, are arguments more than sufficient to awaken attention, and animate the zeal of this House. Your Grace’s well-known regard for the interests of religion, your hearty concern for this Church, and firm

attachment to His Majesty's person and government, supersede the necessity of my assuring you, that the high character you now sustain as representing His Majesty's royal person in this Assembly, is most agreeable to them, and your Grace will permit me to say, in a peculiar manner acceptable to me. It only remains to hope and pray, that this Assembly may be so influenced by the wisdom which is from above, as that all their decisions may tend to the Divine honour and the good of this Church, which we know will most effectually recommend us to the continuance of His Majesty's royal favour and protection."

It has already been stated, that the degree of doctor in divinity had been conferred upon Webster previous to his proceeding to London in 1760, in company with other four ministers, as a deputation to address King George III. on his accession to the throne, and also to address the Princess Dowager of Wales, the King's mother. An abstract is here subjoined of the report of the deputation to the Assembly.

"On our arrival at London, we waited on His Majesty's Secretaries of State, and others

of his ministers, being joined by Gilbert Elliot, Esq., one of the Lords of the Treasury, who was named in commission with us, and to whose assistance we were greatly indebted in the proper discharge of the trust committed to us.

“As commissioners from the Church of Scotland, we thought it our duty to represent, that if the precedents and established forms in cases of this kind could admit of it, we hoped to have the honour of presenting the address to His Majesty on the throne. But upon inquiry it appeared, that such audiences were only given to whole bodies or societies of men, and never to their commissioners or delegates, however numerous, not even to deputations from both Houses of Parliament.* At the same time we had the pleasure to be assured, that His Majesty would receive our address with particular marks of his royal regard.

“Accordingly, when we were introduced to His Majesty by the Right Hon. the Earl

* This point of etiquette has since been departed from, both in the case of the Church of Scotland and of Dissenting bodies.

of Holderness, then one of the principal Secretaries of State, and had the honour to present the address, His Majesty was pleased to receive it in the most gracious manner; and after each of us had the honour likewise to kiss his hand, we received, as a distinguishing mark of his royal favour, an answer in writing, which His Majesty seldom gives, except when he receives addresses on the throne.

“We have only to add, that we had the pleasure to receive from all His Majesty’s ministers warm and repeated assurances of their regard for the Church of Scotland, and their hearty concern for its welfare and prosperity; and that the noble person who now represents His Majesty in this Assembly (Lord Cathcart), and all the other noblemen and gentlemen of Scotland, members of Parliament, and others then at London, whom we had the honour to see, behaved towards us on that occasion in such a friendly manner as gave us most agreeable impressions of their affectionate regard to this Church.”

To these addresses most cordial and friendly

answers were vouchsafed ; and if we consider the character of the royal personages to whom they were presented—the care and attention of the amiable Princess in the religious training of her son, and the fruits of that education manifested throughout life, in the undisputed piety of the Monarch himself, we must regard them as not merely dictated by courtly etiquette, but as the genuine sentiments of those who were anxious to promote the best interests of the country.

The following are the titles of Dr Webster's printed Sermons :—(1.) “ The Wicked Life, and Fatal but Deserved Death of Haman, Ahasuerus' Prime Minister,” 1740. (2.) “ Supernatural Revelation the only sure hope of Sinners,” (preached before the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge), 1741. (3.) “ Heathens professing Judaism when the fear of the Jews fell upon them.” Two sermons from Esther viii. 17, preached on the thanksgiving for the late victory (Culloden,) 1746. (4.) “ Zeal for the civil and religious interests of mankind recommended,” (preached at the opening of the Assembly), 1754.

CHAPTER VI.

WITH regard to what has been already referred to, viz., the awakening to religious influences at Cambuslang in Scotland, in the year 1742, the pastor had faithfully urged upon the people the necessity of forsaking sin; and the preciousness of a free salvation offered to them in the gospel. The fruits of these ministrations had appeared in the anxiety of the people to walk in newness of life. Those who cavil at divine things, regarded the holy impressions made upon the minds of the people as mere delusion and fanatical excitement.

Dr Alexander Webster wrote an able tract upon the occasion, in the form of a letter, which completely silenced the gainsayers; and as it is very scarce, it may be introduced in this volume, as to many readers it will, I doubt not, be acceptable. A recent anony-

mous writer says, regarding this subject, viz., the awakenings to repentance at Cambuslang, &c., "I have thought that the Letter by Dr Webster, on the 'Extraordinary Work of the Spirit at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, and other places in the West of Scotland,' might be useful in convincing some of the necessity and propriety of a calm and reverent inquiry into the doctrine of the person and offices of the Holy Ghost. * * * I may further remark, in reference to Dr Webster's letter, what must be obvious to every one who peruses it, that the meek, patient, and Christian-like spirit manifested by him, in speaking of these things, presents a striking contrast to that evinced by the ministers in our day. Would to God that the ministers and elders would cherish the like spirit and earnest desire to know the truth, 'written for our learning,' which so strikingly characterised many of the ministers of the Church of Scotland in 1742, and none more so than Dr Webster."

Similar effects had been seen at the Kirk of Shotts, a parish also in the west of Scotland, during the incumbency of Mr Hance. But

this took place at an earlier period. It was after the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. Mr Hance, the parish minister, and John Livingstone, chaplain to the Countess of Wigton, and Robert Bruce of Kinnaird, were the officiating ministers, when it is stated that God had vouchsafed so much of his presence during the celebration of that ordinance, that it was thought expedient to set apart the Monday following, to return thanks to Him for his special grace and favour.

It had not been usual to have service on the Monday after the Sacrament. This was on the 21st June 1630. The day is called "Thanksgiving Monday," and is now generally observed throughout the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. There were no fast-days at this time, nor for a considerable period after. Much remarkable work of conviction and conversion was carrying on at that time. Mr Robert Blair went over to Bangor, in Ireland, and was instrumental in bringing about a great revival of religion in that quarter. Several other Scotsmen also went to Ireland at the same period, whose ministrations in the

counties of Down and Antrim produced great effects, by means of their frequent exhortations to the people, as time and circumstances would permit. This was about the year 1626.

These ministers afterwards came over to Scotland, and, it is probable, that their example might contribute to multiply sermons and field-preachings, both before and after the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. Such practices, when any remarkable work was manifestly going on might be fit and proper, but at other times very unseasonable, and not conducive to edification.

After the Revolution, there were stated sermons on the fast-day, Saturday, and Monday, and a number of ministers employed to assist at the communion, which was seldom celebrated. But to remedy the evils resulting from too great a concourse of people from different parts, and many churches in consequence left destitute of Divine service on the Lord's Day, the General Assembly recommended more frequent communion, and a restriction in the number of assistants to the parish minister on that occasion.

What might be expedient and a necessity in an unsettled state of public affairs, and in seasons of political and religious disquietude, becomes unsuitable and even blameworthy in peaceable and propitious times, when every one may worship God without molestation.

To promote order, harmony, and consistent practice and discipline in the Presbyterian Establishment, was the aim and object of those steady, upright men in connection with it by destiny or choice, who flourished in the last century, such as Dr A. Webster, and his friend, Dr John Erskine, the colleague of Robertson the historian. To rescue it from the spirit of fanatical republicanism, in which the turbulent passions of an excited populace were likely to keep it in thrall, and to place it upon a solid basis, so as to render it in a peculiar and special sense the great magazine or store from which the supplies of knowledge and instruction, spiritual and moral, should be sent forth throughout the land, for the enlightenment of the people at large, was their aim. Many districts were as yet in an ignorant and semibarbarous condition, and these

were not the men that disregarded or despised “the smoking flax,” but wheresoever the least indication appeared of a saving work going on in the hearts of those that had been dead and dormant before, they rejoiced to see it kindle into a light that would shine before men, as an evidence of that faith by which God in heaven is glorified.

The following is Dr Webster’s Letter on the revival of religion at Cambuslang, a village in Lanarkshire, chiefly occupied by weavers and miners. This revival, which is known by the name of the “Cambuslang work,” took place in the year 1742, under the ministration of the Rev. Mr M’Culloch of the Established Church of Scotland.

August 30, 1742.

“SIR,—Since my return from Cambuslang and Kilsyth, I had the favour of yours, desiring my opinion concerning the so much talked-of conversions in these and other places. My present situation makes it somewhat difficult to comply with your demand; and yet regard to truth, and the request of a friend whom I

am not accustomed to deny anything, obliges me not to conceal my sentiments.

“ When any extraordinary event is said to have happened, immediately to commence a *believer* discovers much weakness of mind ; to slight the report without proper inquiry, if attended with plausible circumstances of probability, is criminal indolence ; and to refuse a fact, if well vouched, merely because of an extraordinary nature, *downright infidelity*.

“ If the event is not only out of the common course, but of great consequence to mankind, it requires more serious attention ; and, ere we yield a rational assent, must indeed be supported by a proportional degree of evidence. Things wonderful are not to be admitted upon slight grounds.

“ What was alleged, first with respect to Cambuslang, and now as to several places in the west, is doubtless surprising, and of the utmost importance : that such numbers of thoughtless sinners should be at once brought to this soul-concerning question, ‘ What must we do to be saved ? ’ and that so many should share liberally of the consolations of the Holy

Ghost, is a rare thing in this day of fatal security, and *visible* withdrawals of the Spirit. This, I apprehend, will vindicate my solicitous inquiries, and apologize for the doubt I at first entertained.

“ You know I welcomed the news with joy and surprise, and often wished, in the presence of the God of all grace, that it might be so : But you was likewise the witness of my perplexing fears and unbelieving jealousies,— ‘ Can these things be ? ’ When the fact became notour, and was attested by the most credible eye and ear witnesses, there remained no reasonable ground of doubt ; and yet, having never seen such remarkable effects of the Redeemer’s all-conquering grace, was much in the same situation with the Jews, when God turned back the captivity of Zion, like as men that dreamed, or as the disciples, when told that Jesus was risen from the dead, they believed not for joy. Not being naturally over-credulous, I was indeed in this matter slow of heart to believe, and therefore resolved to use all possible means of obtaining entire satisfaction ; which made me embrace a call

I had in providence to go to Cambuslang; and having been there once and again, and likewise at Kilsyth, &c., what I now write is not bare hearsays or flying reports, but the result of the most deliberate and accurate inquiry. What I have seen, and what I have felt of Divine influence, that declare I unto you.

“ The scene indeed is almost beyond description, and it is but a faint idea I can promise to give of this surprising dispensation of the grace of God. The public have already been told, that it had its first remarkable appearance at Cambuslang, on Thursday, February 18th, when, after sermon, fifty persons came together to the minister’s house, under alarming apprehensions about the state of their souls.*

“ Numbers have been since awakened to a like sense of sin and danger, many comforted, and not a few filled with the Holy Ghost. Nor are these remarkable events now confined to this favoured place; Kilsyth had likewise a peculiar visit, on Sabbath the 25th of April;

* See *Mr Robe’s Narrative of Facts, in a letter to a friend, attested by Ministers, Preachers, and others, &c.*

many other congregations have shared of the same privilege,—salvation runs from door to door,—the happy influence diffuses all around.

“ During the time of Divine worship, solemn and profound reverence overspreads every countenance ; they hear as creatures made for eternity, who do not know but next moment they must account to their great Judge. Thousands are melted down into tears,—many cry out in the bitterness of their soul, and some of both sexes, and all ages, from the stoutest man to the tenderest child, shake and tremble, and a few fall down as dead. Nor does this happen only when men of warm address alarm them with the terrors of the law, but when the most deliberate preacher talks of *redeeming love*. Bring them to Mount Sinai, where thunders roar, and lightnings flash, this may perhaps occasion greater outcry ; but lead them into the consolations that are in Jesus, and then vastly greater numbers fall under the most kindly impressions. Talk of a precious Christ, all seem to breathe after Him ; describe His glory, how ravished do many appear !—how captivated with His loveliness !

Open the wonders of His grace, and the silent tears drop from almost every eye. Such eternal, such glorious themes seem the delight of their souls, and reign triumphant over each power and faculty.

“ These, dear Sir, are the visible effects of this extraordinary work, during the time of Divine worship, the truth of which will not be disputed, being obvious to all, and constantly evidenced in their public ministrations, in a less or greater degree. Upon conversing with them when public service is over, which I made my particular business, they gave a scriptural distinct account of the temper of their mind, and various springs whence their tears of sorrow or joy flow. Those struck in the most awful manner, when recovered from the violence of the shock, mention the quick and affecting sense they had of Divine wrath before they were so affected. They condescend upon the particular part of the sermon or scripture which occasioned such views of their guilt and misery; they describe the gradual openings of their mind, till led back to the Rock whence they were hewn; they see that

they were conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity, and humbly acknowledge they have been transgressors from the womb. They speak out of a painful sense of sin, not only as the ruin of the creature, but dishonouring to a kind, a *loving* Saviour. Unbelief in a particular manner cuts them to the very heart; they cannot bear the thoughts of having so long rejected the Son of God, and despised his endearing calls in the gospel. Being persuaded that He *is the only Redeemer of a lost world*, they breathe after him under every character, and in every relation, as a King upon his throne, clothed with authority to reign, as well as a Priest on the cross, endowed with ability to save. Willingly would they part with all for an interest in Jesus, and desire nothing more than to be taught by this great Prophet. Sensible of their utter inability to believe, how earnestly do they pray, Open the everlasting doors of our heart; come in, thou blessed of the Lord, be our God and portion!

“ Those who have attained comfort, readily give a reason of the hope and joy that is in them, with meekness and fear, declaring, to

the praise of Divine grace, how the Holy Ghost, formerly a convincer, proved also their comforter, by discovering their warrant to lay hold on Jesus the Saviour, and happily determining them to embrace a whole Christ, as freely offered in the gospel, for all their salvation and all their desire ; ‘whom having not seen,’ say they, ‘we love ; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’ Sensible of the blessed change that has passed upon their minds, they rejoice that old things are done away, and all things become new.

“ It is not pretended, nor can indeed be supposed (considering the former ignorance of many), that all of them, when first awakened, give such distinct accounts of the working of their minds, or that all, whom there is ground to think have fled for refuge to the hope set before them, have attained to such a joyful faith ; but I have honestly described the case of the generality, as I had it from themselves.

“ Such as have not a like opportunity of converse with them, can have no other evidence of their inward attainments (abstract-

ing from its effects upon their lives, of which afterwards), but the testimony of others.

“ I do not call them to depend on the word of an anonymous author ; the Narrative already referred to,* will sufficiently confirm this representation. The number of witnesses are many,—their character fair and good ; they attest only a fact which they could not mistake through ignorance, namely, what the convinced or comforted declared unto them ; and I think their veracity is beyond all reasonable suspicion. Men must be deeply embarked in the opposition, who can suppose such a number of ministers, preachers, and others, hitherto of untainted fidelity, living in distant corners, and very different as to their opinions in some respects, all in league with hell, and associated together to lie upon the Holy Ghost, that, if possible, they may deceive the very elect.

“ It is not, I think, alleged, that part of this scene is pretence and dissimulation ; I mean, that the persons professedly under soul-concern, and which seems so to affect their bodies,

* *Robe's Narrative, attested by Ministers, &c.*

are acting a part ; the reality has often appeared to the most skilful inquirers. Some few pretenders there were at first ; but this sickness would not feign ; they were immediately discovered, and solemnly rebuked. It removes this work the farther from suspicion, that persons from all different corners have been affected pretty much in the same manner ; and many are the instances of profane and open mockers falling under the like power of the word ; ridiculing this moment, and the next, fainting under some dreadful pressure. It cannot, I think, be fairly supposed, that men so disaffected, would immediately join in putting a cheat upon mankind, and expose themselves, rather than not support a cause, till now, the subject of their mirth. ‘ Good impressions,’ says the Narrative, ‘ have been made on persons of very different characters and ages ; on some of the most abandoned, as well as more sober ; on young, as well as old ; on the illiterate, as well as the more knowing ; on persons of a slower, as well as those of a quicker and more sprightly genius ; and, which seems to deserve special attention, on persons

who were addicted to scoffing at sacred things; and this work in particular at the beginning of it.'

" But you will readily ask, what fruit have these things? Does their faith work by love? Does it shew itself by works? Yes, my friend, and that, too, in a most remarkable manner. Their faith daily ripens into action, and, to the conviction of those who know them best, is a living spring of new obedience. They esteem all God's precepts concerning all things to be right, and hate every false way. The lives of the profane are visibly reformed; relative duties conscientiously discharged, where were the most culpable neglects; the high praises of God employ the tongue of blasphemers; harmony and peace succeed strife and contention; families, once the synagogues of Satan, are become temples where God is worshipped and adored; persons of all ages form themselves into little societies for religious discourse and prayer; praise is perfected out of the mouth of babes and sucklings; grosser sinners profess the greatest remorse for acts of injustice, and do not fail to make

restitution, even where the injury might have remained hid till time is no more, and where such returns bear hard on their circumstances.

“ Never did any converts appear endowed with more of a truly Christian spirit. Their souls burn with love to God, and desire to promote His interest in the world ; with love to Jesus, to one another, and to all that bear the Divine image. They cheerfully forgive their enemies, and wish well to their fellow-creatures. How great their concern for the salvation of mankind, let their works declare ; works, whatever some have falsely reported, confined within the proper sphere of private Christians. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, they persuade men ; having tasted also that he is gracious, they commend his precious grace ; their labour of love indefatigable ; their success great, insomuch that numbers, now in a promising way, date their first concern from hearing others declare what God had done for their souls.

“ Such, my dear friend, are the hopeful beginnings of this God-like work, those a few of its happy consequences ; as you will see, not

only from the attestation of their respective ministers, for the same good accounts are given of their present behaviour by those who have access to the most accurate inspection of their daily practice. Their particular acquaintance, or nearest relations, their parents, masters and mistresses, are living witnesses of their holy and unblemished conversation.

“It is indeed justly alleged, that we must not lay too great stress on the most promising beginnings; and that perseverance in good fruits is the decisive proof in things of this nature. Meanwhile, the blessed effects already appearing promise as well as time and the nature of the work will admit; and therefore, charity obliges to believe the argument arising from perseverance shall not be wanting; it daily grows stronger and stronger, and we trust shall do so to the end.

“It is indeed extremely possible that the impressions upon some are but transient, and that several, who seem to have started fair, will return again to folly; but should this happen (which I pray God may not be the case), it can no more be reasonably objected

against the sincerity of others, than the passing conviction of a Felix will prove that never any were truly converted under Paul's ministry; or, that there are no real Christians in the world, because many have a name to live and are dead. Judas, seemingly not behind the other apostles, betrayed his Lord and Master; and yet the rest sealed the testimony of Jesus with their blood.

"This plain state of the case, one would imagine, evidently speaks out its Divine original. The memorable 18th of February was preceded by three days of solemn prayer and earnest addresses for the success of the gospel; the work was begun and carried on under the influence of sound doctrine.* And as its rise was thus scriptural, its effects you have heard are no less so. Sin is become bitter, Jesus precious to many souls: hundreds, perhaps thousands, have set out for heaven and immortality; they are holding on in the paths of truth and righteousness, and their knowledge, like the morning light, advancing with increasing brightness to the perfect day.

* See *Robe's Narrative, attested by Ministers, &c.*, p. 4.

“Nothing seemed wanting to prove this a work of the Spirit of God, but that it should be opposed by the enemy of all righteousness ; and indeed he has not failed to furnish us with this proof also. Amidst these approaches of Immanuel’s kingdom, Satan and his emissaries do not cease to rage ; and some, of whom better things might have been expected, have gone awful lengths with those that blaspheme the operations of the Holy Ghost ; company which, I am sure, they would not knowingly wish to join.

“But in vain do they attempt to fight against God, in vain do they think to bear down truth ; facts so well attested are not to be shaken by suppositions, may-be’s, and calumnies ; they must shew that the case in hand is not capable of proof, or ought to yield their assent, when attended with all the evidence which the nature of the thing will admit.

“Now, I take it for granted, that the foregoing representation contains nothing in itself impossible. That a family, a congregation, or even a nation, should be born at once, by no means exceeds Divine power, and is ex-

actly agreeable to the prophecies of New Testament days, when the Spirit shall be poured out from on high. The same Holy Ghost who enlivens one dead sinner, can with equal ease, being everywhere present and all-powerful, command any given number into newness of life: His quickening ability is the same to-day, as when three thousand souls were converted at one sermon, (Acts ii. 41.)

“Nor can any impossibility be justly alleged from our present circumstances. How far we in this land have departed from the Lord God of our fathers, is not easy to say; but to suppose us beyond the reach of mercy is an unworthy limitation of Divine goodness, and proceeds upon this *fatal mistake*, that in converting men, God is moved by *something good and valuable in them*, and acts not for his own name’s sake, the glory and freedom of Divine grace, but for our sakes; a supposition contrary to repeated declarations in Scripture, and daily experiences, which teach, that he is found of them that do not seek him, and hath mercy on the very chief of sinners, that in them he may shew forth a pattern of all

long-suffering to those who should hereafter believe.

“That not one soul can be converted within the pale of the Established Church of Scotland, has not, I think, been asserted in express words by the most violent opposers, nor can be entertained but by a mind deaf to all reasoning, through the force of prejudice. This, I know, has been charged upon the gentlemen of the Secession, and drawn as an inference from their writings; but, till they say so in as many words, I am not willing to think so unworthily of them; nor judge it needful further to prove that God may yet pity *degenerate Scotland*, and revive his own work in the midst of these years of *backsliding* and *defection*.*

“If He may thus display his sovereign grace, I think we must leave it to the same sovereign

* Christ hitherto hath come to the Church when it needed a reformation,—when religion dwindled into an empty form, and professors had lost the life and power of Godliness,—when there was midnight darkness, and little faith to be found on the earth. Thus it was when he came in the flesh; when he sent Athanasius, Luther, and Calvin; and at the Reformation of Scotland.—(*Christ Triumphant, &c.*, by Mr Finley, page 27.)

Lord to choose what *means*, and in what *way*, he will accomplish this work. I do not wonder that the Original Seceders (who, perhaps, from a single eye to his glory, formed themselves into a separate society) should wish and hope to have been the happy instruments of reviving decayed religion; but their hopes have been carried beyond all reasonable bounds, if saying, ‘by us, and by us only, shall Jacob arise; in this way God must act and no other:’ language altogether improper for a creature.

“If they look into their own breast, or review their after-conduct, they will perhaps discover somewhat intermixed with their offering, whence it has not been so acceptable to the Most High. Not to enter on the reasons why they at first seceded, there is one thing I would suggest to their consideration; that instead of acting upon the first principles of preaching the gospel to desolate congregations, and holding communion with those ministers and people they were pleased to think an honest contending party,* they

* But notwithstanding of this our present secession from

have, I am afraid, for some time been employed in weakening the hands of these very ministers. Have they not gone into their congregations, where perhaps there was scarce a shadow of invitation? The dismal colours in which some servants of Jesus have been, on these occasions, painted, I do not choose to

the prevailing party in the judicatories of this Church, yet we hereby declare, as our protestation bears, that we are willing “to hold communion with all such as desire with us to adhere unto the principles of the true Presbyterian Covenanted Church of Scotland, in her doctrine, discipline, worship, and government; and particularly with every one who are groaning under these evils, and affected with these grievances that we have been complaining of, and who are in their several spheres wrestling against the same; and we hope that there is a goodly number of such in the several corners of this church.”—(*Testimony, by Messrs Ebenezer Erskine, Wilson, Moncrieff, and Fisher, printed 1734, p. 95.*)

“By withdrawing from these judicatories (at present), and joining with the said brethren, I intend and understand no withdrawing from ministerial communion with any of the godly ministers of this National Church that are groaning under, or wrestling against, the defections of the times, even though they have not the same light with us in every particular contained in the foresaid Testimony.”—(*Adherence by Mr Ralph Erskine to Mr Mair's declaration of secession, given in to the Presbytery of Dunfermline, February 1737.*)

After reading the above adherence, Mr Mair declared to the Associate Presbytery, that he was of the same mind with his brother Mr Erskine.—(*Act, Declaration, and Testimony, 1737, pp. 117, 118, 119.*)

represent; and all this for no other reason but that they judged it their duty to continue striving against the defections of the Church, still hoping for better days. What, then, if God is now testifying his displeasure against such an attempt to mar the usefulness of these faithful ministers, by not crowning their own labours with the wished success? Or may he not, even in pity to them, remarkably countenance the ministry of some they despised, that they may henceforth learn not so rashly to call those God has sanctified, common or unclean? Could there be any way of rectifying their mistake, more condescending, more worthy of himself?

“To return, I would have it also considered, that God is far from working always in the *way* and by the *means* that we should judge best, that almost *every remarkable dispensation* of his grace has been brought about quite contrary to human views, and many times by the most unlikely instruments. We would never have chosen illiterate fishermen to confound the learning and eloquence of Greece, or twelve poor defenceless creatures, destitute of human

force, void of eloquence, to oppose the wisdom of the great, and the power of the whole known world. Nor would we have raised Paul, the persecutor, to be the most glorious support of the Christian Church. A Luther would have appeared a contemptible mean to shake the kingdom of Antichrist; but God will have us to be still, and know that he is God, who works in a way peculiar to himself, that the whole power and excellency may appear to be from on high. So that it ought not to discredit this work to any set whatever, that God has not carried it on by the instruments of their choosing, or under the ministry of those they had marked out for the honour.

“Some resolve this whole matter into the influence of mere *sound* and *gesture*. And because it is universally acknowledged that the minister of Cambuslang, a gentleman of known piety and learning, has but a weak voice, no violent action, and is far from endeavouring to stir up unreasonable passions, they artfully connect this affair with the Rev. Mr. Whitefield; hoping that those who do not judge favourably of him, will, for this reason,

entertain sorry notions of what has passed ; and that others, because of his fervent address, will believe all to be the effect of mechanism. The blending these things together serves likewise to raise a cry, though most unjust, as if Presbyterian and Reformation principles were in danger, and that this work stands in direct opposition to the testimony of the day. It is, therefore, in my opinion, of consequence to the cause to observe, that Mr Whitefield is entirely out of the question. My regard for him is well known ; he may be liable to err as well as others ; I have not yet seen a perfect minister, more than a perfect layman ; but he is doubtless a pious soul, and one whom God has highly honoured in the work of the gospel. However, it can give no offence to say, that he did not so much as preach at Cambuslang when last in Scotland. That he left this country at least four months before the remarkable 18th of February ; and that, ere his return in June, the work had spread in many very different places of the west. We have been often told, that passions, raised mechanically, are awaked when the mecha-

nical powers, voice, gesture, or what you will, act; and are always but short-lived, ceasing for the most part with the motion of the instrument whence they flow. But here, it seems, sound and action operate on persons who neither saw the one nor heard the other; or, if some of them were eye and ear witnesses, yet they remained unaffected while the mechanical powers were in motion. But when the engine ceased, and several months are elapsed, when the operator is removed some hundred miles' distance from their view and observation, all their passions are fired by the distant machine, and continue still to affect them in the most sensible manner. You have studied, Sir, the doctrine of sounds and their effects, and I believe will admit this is talking so unphilosophically, as would expose the authors of such supposition to universal ridicule, was it not for the *too general contempt of real and vital Christianity*.

“ But, though opposers do not succeed so well in accounting for the rise of the extraordinary concern upon the minds of so many people at first, they are at no loss to describe

its after progress, and entertain us with the wonderful effects of sympathy, and the mighty force of example, and have discovered that persons may be naturally and mechanically moved with seeing others in distress. Who doubts of all this? But if they intend hence to say, that the whole spread of this blessed work is mere mechanism, and consequently not to be regarded, are they not plainly begging the question? They will forgive us not to admit assertions for proof, and to oppose the scriptural accounts persons affected give of their distress or attainments, the substantial lasting effects these things have had, particularly in forming their minds into a God-like frame and disposition; and all this followed by a corresponding reformation of life. But if it is only inferred, that persons now under concern were, or might be, first affected by observing the concern of others, in this we apprehend there is nothing exceptionable. Actions must be allowed to have a language, in many cases more strong and persuasive than words; and if a man who, being himself a sinner, is touched with seeing the direful

effects of sin upon others, or hearing their moving representations of approaching danger, his convictions have a most rational spring, and he does well to take warning from their misery. In short, the fallacy of the objection proceeds upon a supposition that arguments in favour of this work are drawn from a seeming outward concern, which may indeed proceed from other springs than the Spirit of God. Whereas the cause is built on a quite other foundation, as just now hinted, the saving change wrought upon their souls, accounted for by the happy persons according to the law and the testimony; and this change evidenced in the whole of their practice and walk,—effects which we contend cannot proceed from mere mechanism, and must be admitted as decisive of the point in question, there being no other rule by which we can judge the state of another. When sound and gesture will not do, and this earth cannot afford a cause proportioned to the mighty effect, rather than God should have the glory, hell must be searched, and the whole glorious scene ascribed to the devil. Here we are put in

mind that Satan sometimes *transforms* himself into an angel of light. But they must say a great deal more, *that he really is* an angel of light, and working the work of God. The devil himself, were he not the father of liars, would, methinks, be ashamed to call this his work, or claim the converts as children. How unlike to their father! From the Apostle John's observation (1 John iii. 10), 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother,' we must necessarily infer, that whosoever doeth righteousness is not of the devil, neither he that loveth his brother. But it seems the Apostle is mistaken, and the devil is now begetting many children by the word of truth, who cannot sin, because born of him, and his seed remaineth in them. The 'World Unmasked' lies before me: I do not think the author has hit upon any argument half so conclusive as this for his final restoration of all things, devils not excepted, it being generally admitted, that concern for the sal-

vation of others is one good sign of a person's own conversion.

“ When these and the like absurd consequences naturally follow upon resolving this matter into *delusion* and *Satanical influence*, I can scarce think it possible such harsh thoughts could have been entertained by all the Associate Presbytery, but because of misinformation, or rather some very gross imposition. I am the more confirmed of this when they say, ‘ Nor will any of the fruits of this work, that have hitherto been alleged, be sufficient to difference it either from the common work of the Spirit of God upon hypocrites, or from the delusions of Satan.’* ”

“ The fruits alleged will be allowed sufficient to distinguish the work of God from the work of the devil. The same thing on the matter was alleged (whether proved or not is not the question) in these missives, attestations and journals, they refer to in their said Act. Shall I then think them all insincere? ”

* Act of the Associate Presbytery, anent a publick fast, dated at Dunfermline, July 15, 1742, p. 3.

No ; charity obliges me to believe the greater part have depended upon the *testimony of others*, without reading the attestations, mis-sives, &c. Whence I would willingly hope, now that they see such good fruits both alleged and proved, they will, as on other occasions, frankly acknowledge their mistake, especially seeing if this affair, complexly taken in its rise, progress, and effects, do not point out a genuine work of the Holy Ghost, there seems no criterion left to distinguish the operation of the Spirit of God from the spirit of the devil ; no way by which we can know the voice of Him who speaketh from heaven, from the voice of him who speaketh from hell. What of infernal agency is alleged, from some uncommon symptoms, will be considered afterwards ; and I shall only furthersay, that it ought not to shake the faith of serious souls lately brought home to Christ, that they have been arraigned as under the delusions of Satan. Jesus himself was thus reviled, and the operation of his Divine Spirit ascribed to Beelzebub, the prince of devils. The argument whence he exposed the folly and iniquity of

this supposition will equally support their cause. The question, which on that occasion silenced the Pharisees, will equally difficult their opposers; 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falleth; if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?' (Luke xi. 17, 18.) It is indeed moving, that the opposition is joined by some of whose Christianity I can have no doubt, and yet no strange thing has happened. Luther, who now enjoys delightful communion with Calvin in the Jerusalem above, was rash enough to call him a white devil, when *equally concerned* with himself to promote the interest of their common Lord and Master.

"Again, this blessed work has been represented as the ministration of death, flowing merely from legal terrors, and issuing in despair. The terrors of the Lord have indeed awakened many to *timely fear*, making them, as the man pursued by the avenger of blood, flee for refuge to the hope set before them; but (which is a wonder of grace) not one soul, to the best of my information, has given over

hopes of mercy. That men in danger of hell should be afraid of hell ; and that children of wrath, being moved with fear, should flee from that wrath, is the language of right reason, and exactly agreeable to revelation, which represents the law as a schoolmaster leading to Christ. Every adult person must in a less or greater measure be brought to a sense of danger ere they welcome Jesus their deliverer, and this is necessarily attended with a correspondent degree of terror. Fear is interwoven, as it were, with our make ; that we may shun evil it sounds the alarm, and is generally the first spring which excites to action, though hope and love must be allowed the more endearing motives, and what effectually captivate heart and soul. Nor are these wanting in the present case, as already represented. Whatever awful views attend first convictions in some, especially grosser sinners, yet how sweetly are they afterwards moved with the cords of love, and these bonds of a man ! Few, perhaps, were ever more feelingly constrained by the kindness of a Saviour.

“ Enthusiasm is next brought into the ac-

count, which is ever at hand with some pretenders to reason, to discredit the *operations* of the Holy Ghost. The sudden change which they suppose the converts undergo from fear to hope, from terror to joy, and an alleged variableness of their frame, explains the whole mystery to gentlemen of their penetration. They will forgive me to say, that as they build upon very false suppositions, their conclusions are equally unjust. Many among the first awakened continue still in distress; the greater part have attained to hope, in consequence of a gradual distinct work upon their mind; and if some few have not been so long under the spirit of bondage, it seems quite agreeable to Divine goodness. Where the sense of wrath was so deep and affecting, had it been also lasting, the spirits which God had made must have failed before him. And because God is kind and condescending, in pitying the weakness of his creatures, shall our eye be evil? That the mind must be enlightened in the knowledge of sin and of a Saviour, faith wrought, and the nature changed, ere a man can be denominated a Christian, or rejoice in

the good of God's chosen ones, is allowed ; but that these beginnings of the Divine life must always be a work of great time and leisure, requiring months or years, is nowhere that I know taught in Scripture, and seems directly contrary to many instances there recorded.

“How soon was Saul the persecutor changed into Paul the chief of the apostles ! (Acts ix. 1, &c.) Three thousand lying in sin and wickedness when Peter begins to preach, are believers before he has done, and that very day added to the church (Acts ii. 37, 41) ; the trembling jailor becomes that same hour a joyful believer (Acts xvi. 29, 30, 34) ; a thief, while hanging upon the cross, is at once enlightened, justified, comforted, and, amidst his expiring groans, made meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light (Luke xxiii. 43). God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, saying, ‘ Let there be light, and there was light,’ can with equal ease, and in a moment too, shine into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, working at the

same time the most joyful lively faith. And even suppose, according to the mistaken principles of some moralists, conversion did not at all proceed from *Divine influence*, but was the effect of mere *reason and argument*; still the change would pass upon one much sooner than upon another, and that in proportion to the quickness of their genius, the pliability of their will, the tenderness of their affections, and more advantageous circumstances, &c. We find, in common and civil life, one man will learn more in a day than another in a year; and an ingenuous mind be moved with very small entreaty, when repeated solicitations and multiplied arguments are necessary to gain the more obstinate. It cannot therefore warrant the charge of enthusiasm, that a sinner under soul-distress has attained some measure of ease and quiet in a few days, if he can give a good reason of the hope that is in him. Call him an enthusiast if you will, who is constantly fluctuating amidst the troubled waters of despair and high tides of joy, when not able to assign a reasonable cause either for the one or other; but so far is this from

the present case, that those who sooner than others have passed from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the kingdom of God, give the most satisfying account, first of their distress, and then of their relief. Nor is their after frame more variable than what is common to other Christians, flowing from the present state of imperfection. Some have arrived at solid joy and peace in believing, others are still harassed with remaining doubts and fears; and if ye find a few lamenting an absent God, who once walked in the light of his countenance, this, I apprehend, is no unusual case among saints of longer standing, and more acquaintance with the religious life. (Psal. xxx. 7; lxxvii. 7-9; lxxxviii. throughout; Song iii.)

“When opposers ascribe this work to *fancy* and *whim*, they consider it as consisting wholly in impressions, irrational fears, and delusive joy; and seem quite to have forgotten its certain fruits and effects,—*change of nature*, and *renovation of life*. They will allow, that from nothing nothing can proceed; that every *effect* must have a *cause*; that no *cause* can produce

an *effect* more real and excellent than itself; and from thence it will follow, that *fancy* must be the *consequence* of *fancy*, and *delusion* the only effect of *delusion*. Whence, then, the new nature in these converts? Whence their newness of life? Shall we believe the *most glorious*, the *most substantial*, the *most real* blessings, the product of *mere imagination*, the offspring of a *deluded brain*! Thrice happy delusion!—O my soul, may I ever thus be deceived, and ever feel the same blessed effects!

“It would appear that others in the opposition are apprehensive,—if the fruits be good, they cannot reasonably be supposed to flow from such false delusive springs, and therefore take another way,—misrepresenting their conduct who are the subjects of this work.

“*Idleness* and *neglect* of their civil affairs is a principal charge, but not better supported than a thousand other flying reports. That persons almost struck dead, and cut to the heart with the twinges and throes of an awakened conscience should not enter so heartily into the business of life, while feeling the smart, will be no wonder to one who ex-

perimentally knows a wounded spirit, and is in itself no more surprising than that we do not find Paul making tents when lying on the ground through the overwhelming influence of the heavenly vision. Besides, it will be found, that when the violence of the shock is over, and especially where they have attained to the joyful prospect of a happy eternity, they go on in their respective callings with uncommon cheerfulness and alacrity, and well deserve the character of 'not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' Even when the number of the distressed, and the circumstances of their case, required more than ordinary attendance upon prayer and exhortation, this was so managed as to occasion little or no interruption in their labour, of which their present plentiful crop is sufficient evidence; and now, in all their religious societies, such times and places are fixed upon as least interfere with their other engagements. It may be very true, that at first, when an event so remarkable engrossed the attention and conversation of all around, persons otherwise idly disposed (of which there are

numbers in the neighbouring, as well as other populous cities), might, under pretence of attending divine worship, employ themselves quite another way, and defraud their masters of their time; but it is evidently unfair dealing to charge this (if it be the case) upon the ministers, who were careful to discourage such practices, or upon the body of the serious people, who act another, and, in all respects, a good part. Tares will mix in with the wheat to the end of time, and the vile dwell with the good in this world of sin and sorrow.

“Suffer me to add, that such objections, of being a little too long engaged in spiritual worship, generally proceed from those who can trifle away whole nights, or perhaps spend them in calumny and slander, if not in chambering and wantonness, rioting and drunkenness; and it will hold true in general, that more time is criminally employed in censuring their conduct than those devout souls employ in prayer. I am as much as any man for people minding their *proper secular affairs*, and judge, that he ‘who does not provide for his own house, is worse than an infidel, and

hath denied the faith ;' but must likewise think, there are certain seasons where more time than ordinary may be set apart for things of *eternal concernment* ; and am extremely apprehensive the noise that is made about not more carefully attending to things temporal, proceeds from forgetting that we are but 'pilgrims and strangers on the earth,' who, having here no continuing city, should look for one that is to come, and 'seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.' Let men who have their portion in this life count every hour lost which is not employed in amassing perishing riches ; but let the Christian, whose hopes lie beyond the grave, reckon no day well-spent wherein he does not make some advances towards heaven and immortality.

" Fancied imprudences are much talked of, and every trifling irregularity magnified into disorder, inconsistent with a religion coming from the God of order, and the doctrine of the apostles, who would have all things done with decency.

" The minister's conduct is, in my apprehension, capable of a fair and rational vindi-

cation. If everything has not been conducted by others so prudently as could have been wished, is not this almost the *necessary consequence* of an affair so *new* and *extraordinary*, where it is not pretended the subjects of it are all learned divines and sedate philosophers? But how will this disprove the work upon the minds of hundreds, against whom even this objection does not lie? Or, if every irregularity as to time or place (for instance) of meeting for prayer, demonstrates that the work in general is not from God, how shall we reconcile the glorious things said by Paul of the church of Corinth, with the much greater disorders (than has been alleged in the present case) they are charged with in the same Epistle by the same apostle? (Compare 1 Cor. i. 1-7, with chapters xi., xiv.)

“It ought to be considered, that human frailties necessarily mix in with all our affairs, civil and religious; and, should we seek only for religion where there is not the *least deviation* from the rules of strict order, I doubt much if we find *faith upon the earth*. If allowances are to be made, doubtless young converts claim

our charity in the first place, especially when their distress has been great, and their joy proportional. Like men coming into a new country, or rather new world, they are not yet acquaint with all the fashions and decencies of it. It is no wonder every punctilio is not observed, which after-experience and cooler reflection will dictate.

“ Shall we pardon the learned, the composed Archimedes, though going beyond all the bounds of decency, when transported with a mathematical discovery, and finding out only certain proportions in figures, an abstract truth, not immediately calculated to attract the affections, and confined to this world in its consequences; and shall we make no allowance for illiterate countrymen and children, and others of small experience, when ravished with the discoveries of another world, and the knowledge of God and Christ, whom to know is life eternal? This were to treat them not with common humanity; but they must expect no quarter. It almost exceeds belief, which yet is further objected,* that they should be

* See Act of Associate Presbytery, &c., p. 3.

charged as under the power of delusion, for not immediately throwing off their own ministers who have been their spiritual fathers, and not embracing a Testimony which many of them never saw, and cannot easily comprehend; and, what is still more surprising, condemned because not joining those who, upon the first rise of this Divine work, were not afraid to ascribe it to the devil. Desire to promote the glory of God, is indeed necessarily connected with a real concern for our own salvation; where Christ dwells in the heart, he will be confessed with the lips. The children of Zion naturally seek the good of Zion, and, when in the due exercise of grace, prefer Jerusalem to their chiefest joy. The interest of Christ's visible external kingdom is dear to such souls; this, in their proper spheres, they endeavour to promote, but still according to the measure of light which God has given them; and doubtless all good men have not the same views in this matter. Nor will it be pretended by any sober-thinking person, that if the subjects of this work, whose love to Christ seems stronger than death, have not

freedom to make a total separation from the ministers of this Church, even the happy instruments of their conversion, and join the brethren's platform in all its circumstances, they can no more get to heaven than a man can walk without legs.

“ I do not think my charity, though a Presbyterian, very extensive, when I can suppose, not only with a reverend gentleman, an Independent within the reach of the gospel-offer, but within the bonds of the everlasting covenant, and hope one day to meet with Dr Owen in the heavenly city, where there is no temple. ‘ Dare any of you,’ says a late writer,* to the Associate Presbytery, ‘ tell the most zealous for your Testimony, and against their own ministers, that these things are marks and evidences of saving grace, and that they may depend upon them as such ; or that the judging your Testimony irregular, and what the Lord required not at your hands in the way and manner you have given it, and their close conjunction with their ministers, are certain evidences that they are Christless and grace-

* Mr Robe's Narrative, Preface, p. 17.

less who do so? I am persuaded, some of you have so much of the root of the matter in you, as you dare not for a world say either of these things.'

"But suppose, if you will, the brethren's Testimony the standard of true religion, to which all gracious souls will at length adhere, will they allow no time for consideration? Was not their own arrival at present truth the consequence of several years' inquiry? May not one then be half a year in a state of grace, before equally enlightened? A person under alarming apprehensions of Divine wrath, cannot, with much sedateness of mind, peruse the endless volumes that have been written on visible external forms. What would you think of his convictions for sin, who made *church-government* his first inquiry? Would he not, do you imagine, be as reasonably and profitably employed in reading Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ, as in studying Public Acts and Testimonies? And suppose he has attained real faith, yet, as the first actings of this Divine grace are oftentimes attended with much darkness as to many things relat-

ing to the spiritual kingdom of God upon the soul, these demand the believer's chief regard, and should employ his first thoughts. It seems, therefore, at least a hasty conclusion, to charge the subjects of this work, when but beginning to be religious, many of them still at a loss whether or not really in Christ, and others still further from comfort, to charge them all with delusion, for not already lifting up the testimony of the day, viz., the Testimony of the Associate Presbytery; a harsh conclusion indeed! especially considering the stumbling-block in their way, not easily got over. How shall they enrol their names with the seceding brethren? How shall they associate in their public assemblies, where they are excommunicated as the children of Satan? How shall they join, with uplifted eyes and hands to heaven, in deprecating the further influences of the Spirit, with respect to themselves or others, which they know to be real, and feel so sweet upon their own souls? Would not this be in them (I do not speak of others) a near approach to, if not in reality, the sin against the Holy Ghost? And shall they be

charged as acted by the devil, because not willing to give themselves up to the devil?

“ Last of all, it is objected, that this work is attended with bitter outcryings, faintings, severe bodily pains, convulsions, voices, visions, and revelations; the usual symptoms of a delusive spirit. Voices, visions, revelations, are added, I suppose, for argument's sake. None of the subjects of this work pretend to these things. One or two impostors, I am informed, under such pretences endeavoured to discredit this work at the beginning; but it is well known what care was taken to detect them, and how effectually they were discouraged. It seems therefore like a willingness to find fault, to object against this people, what was done by their enemies with design to blacken them. And I would have it also carefully noticed, that persons whose distress of mind visibly affects their bodies, or who go the length of crying out, bear but small proportion to the much greater number who are wrought upon in a more kindly usual way, and about whom nothing has appeared but what is common in other cases, when people have been

awakened to a serious concern about religion. So that though all were put out of the account, against whom the objection militates, or in whom there appears any thing doubtful to the most intelligent cautious person, still there would be ground to believe well of vast numbers. Besides, the happy experience of thousands of judicious Christians witness, that, when lately at Cambuslang and Kilsyth, &c., truly their fellowship was with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and judge so, by the same rules whence they have formerly been able to conclude that they enjoyed the Lord: this should make one the more afraid of joining the common cry,—delusion, Satanical influence, and what not? And, on the whole, it follows, that whatever judgment we form of such whose concern is attended with unusual symptoms, it can never found a general charge, nor weaken the argument for the genuineness of this work with respect to others. For allowing that Satan, who no doubt is present at such meetings of the sons of God, was permitted to harass several persons in this extraordinary manner, it would no more prove the

work in general delusive or diabolical, than the charge would be brought against our Saviour, and such as through his word believed on God ; Satan being then permitted to tear multitudes, and cast them down to the ground.

“ We might therefore here break off the argument ; but not being willing that any should be thought the children of the devil, that there is good ground to think God has rescued from the jaws of this devouring lion, I would observe, that it seems very rash judging, to draw too harsh conclusions, merely on account of stronger impressions upon people’s minds than ordinary ; and the natural effects of this upon the body, if they who judge favourably of these persons build their hopes upon such extraordinary visible appearances, the instance of a Felix trembling, &c., which probably did not issue in sound conversion, might justly be objected : But when this good opinion is founded upon the exact resemblance, as to the main strokes, which the exercise of their minds bears to a genuine work of the Spirit of God, as taught in Scripture and experienced by saints in all ages, and upon their holy religious

conversation flowing from this inward change; when the argument on their behalf is thus built on such rational scriptural grounds, and no weight is laid on their outward distress, to what purpose are we entertained with trembling Quakers, deluded Camizars,* prophesying enthusiasts, fainting hypocrites, and short-lived convictions.

“From this history-piece we may indeed learn that men may faint, may tremble, may seem to undergo the pangs of death, and yet still continue under the power of Satan, and the dominion of their lust; and this we readily admit. But does it thence follow, that persons who give all evidences of a sanctified nature, a renewed mind, are still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, merely because, when first convinced, the direful apprehensions of wrath had such effects upon their bodies? It might, with more reason, be inferred, that if the too slight convictions of a Felix, for instance, made him shake and trem-

* Mr Robe in his Preface, p. 12, shews accurately the great disparity between the case of the Camizars and those affected in the west.

ble, when convictions are real, are thorough, are deep, are lasting, they will have no less, nay, greater outward effects. But, indeed, there is no reasoning from effects upon the body as to the nature of the work upon the mind, either one way or the other. In short, our opposers may please themselves with finding out how many that seemed once in the way to heaven are now in hell, but must either say, that if persons faint, tremble, or fall down as dead, they cannot be under the influence of a good spirit, and that it is impossible their conviction should have a saving issue. This much they must say, or they say nothing to the purpose. And if they will go thus far, I shall not have the better opinion either of their philosophy or Christianity. The laws of union betwixt soul and body, and their necessary mutual influence—continually evidenced in common life—will account for effects much more surprising. Suppose several persons, apprehensive of no danger, blessing themselves with present enjoyments, big with future hopes, at once seized, arraigned, tried, cast, and condemned to the flames,

it would exceed no one's belief to be told, when the sentence passed, and the fire was preparing, one wept, another cried out, a third trembled, a fourth fainted ; all swooned away. Again, suppose them bound to the stake, the sparks kindling up, when, of a sudden, the flames are quenched, their bonds loosed, pardon intimated, and all imaginable assurance given that they are heirs of a kingdom ! Would it surprise us to hear, that frail nature, overpowered with rapturous returning joy, once more died away ? The application is obvious, and our surprise should be less, if secure sinners, till now insensible of their condition, thus faint and fail when falling under immediate apprehensions of wrath more intolerable, and the approach of flames unquenchable, or when plucked as brands out of this fire, and ravished with all the wonders of grace, and glories of redeeming love. As the joys of heaven far exceed the pleasures of sense, and the terrors of hell more dreadful than of a furnace seven times heated, it is natural to think their effects should be proportionally greater, and would doubtless be the

case, if attended with the same quick and affecting sense. It greatly strengthens the argument taken from the natural and obvious effects of sudden fear and unexpected joy, that we find such instances in Scripture. How can a Christian read of, perhaps three thousand wounded souls, whose convictions had a saving issue, crying out at once, under the ministry of the word, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' (Acts ii. 37, 41); or of the trembling jailer, afterwards a real believer, brought to his knees, and to the same importunate question, with awful terror. (Acts xvi. 30.) Can they realise the now glorified Paul, struck to the ground under alarming apprehensions? (Acts ix. 4, 6); or John, the beloved disciple, falling as one dead at the Redeemer's feet, when appearing the glorious and exalted King of his church? (Rev. i. 17.) Can they think of the devout Psalmist, roaring all day long, while God's hand lay heavy upon him? (Ps. xxxii. 3, 4); or the fainting spouse of Christ praying to her beloved, 'Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love?' (Cant.

ii. 5.) Do they admit all this, and can they consistently object, that if persons cry out, or tremble, or faint, or fall down as dead, their convictions cannot be genuine, their spring must be diabolical, and their consequence hell? Or, can they say, that if nature is overpowered with the glory and love of Jesus, all is fancy and whim?

“But farther, such instances of bodily distress, flowing from the terrors or joys of the Lord, are not confined to Old Testament days, to the times of the apostles, or first ages of Christianity; later periods afford examples of a similar nature.* The histories of other

* The Rev. Mr John Livingston says of himself: “I remember the first time ever I communicated at the Lord’s Table was in Stirling, when I was at school. When sitting at table, and Mr Patrick Simson exhorting before the distribution, there came such a trembling upon me that all my body shook, yet thereafter fear and trembling departed, and I got some comfort and assurance.”—*Vide* printed Account of his Life, p. 5.

Mr Robe, in his Preface, has excerpted a passage from the author of the *Fulfilling of the Scripture*, p. 185, folio edition, so much to the point in hand that I cannot omit here transcribing it: “I must here instance a very solemn and extraordinary outletting of the Spirit, which, about the year 1625, and thereafter, was in the west of Scotland, while the persecution of the Church there was hot from the prelate party. This by the profane rabble of that time, was called the Stewartoun sickness,

countries contain facts pretty much the same;* nor are like instances wanting in this church, even since the late glorious and happy Revolution.† These things taken to-

for in that parish first, but afterwards through much of the country, particularly at Irvine, under the ministry of the famous Mr Dickson, it was remarkable, where it can be said (which divers ministers and Christians yet alive can witness), that for a considerable time, few Sabbaths did pass without some evidently converted, and some convincing proof of the power of God accompanying His word; yea, that many were so choked and taken by the heart, that, through terror—the Spirit in such a measure convincing them of sin—in hearing of the word, they have been made to fall over, and thus carried out of the church, who afterwards proved most solid and lively Christians. And, as it was known some of the most gross, who used to mock at religion, being engaged upon the fame that went abroad of such things, to go to some of these parts where the Gospel was then most lively, have been effectually reached before their return, with a visible change following the same; and truly, this great spring-tide, which I may so call, of the Gospel, was not of short time, but for some years continuance. Yea, thus, like a spreading moor-burn, the power of godliness did advance from one place to another, which put a marvellous lustre on these parts of the country, the savour whereof brought many from other parts of the land to see the truth of the same.”

* The manifest resemblance of the late glorious work in New England to the present case is obvious, from the Rev. Mr Jonathan Edwards’ Sermon upon the distinguishing marks of the Spirit of God, where you will see several of the foregoing objections are insisted upon against that work, there answered at great length, and with much judgment.

† It is well known, and can be vouched by several persons

gether, mutually confirm and strengthen one another, and are sufficient evidence that the greatest bodily distress attending convictions for sin, or the overwhelmings of frail nature under a lively sense of Divine love, can be no argument against the genuineness of such convictions or the reality of such joy. And it likewise hence appears, that however these effects upon the body have not, for some years, been so visible and strong, yet the case is by no means unprecedented, or not so uncommon and extraordinary as some would have us believe. I do not wonder, that persons who never felt the power of divine eternal things—in whose creed heaven and hell have no place—should stand amazed at what has happened ;

yet living, of known character and veracity, who have seen and heard what passes at Cambuslang, &c., among such as are affected in the manner objected to, that they have frequently observed, in different parts of the country, convictions for sin attended with the like bodily distress ; many being carried out of the churches shaking, trembling, fainting, almost dead, under the ministry of the Rev. Messrs John Hepburn of Orre, Andrew Darling of Kinnoul, William Stewart of Blairgowrie, John Moncrieff of College Church, Edinburgh, &c. ; and that many of these people, not a few of whom are still in life, give, to this day, evident proof of the reality of their concern, by their sedate and religious conversation.

but cannot so easily account for their unbelief who have known the terrors of the Lord, and also the joys of his reconciled countenance dawning upon their souls after a dark night of despair or desertion. Their outward man has not, perhaps, been so much affected ; but have they not learned this much, that had God appeared in more terrible majesty, or afterwards surrounded with more lovely splendour and beauty, nature must have failed ? And I cannot help thinking, had we more just and believing apprehensions of things eternal, a more quick and affecting sense of what belongs to our everlasting peace, the instances before us would not be so rare or astonishing, nor would it then be thought so unpolite for a sinner to appear afraid of everlasting burnings, so unfashionable for a saint openly to rejoice in hope of eternal life.

“ I was asked the other day, why this work was carried on in such a visible way ? Why attended with unusual symptoms ? But have learned too much of my own ignorance, to fancy I can fathom the depths of a God. However, without pretending to search out

the Almighty to perfection, there are many good reasons obvious to us, which infinite wisdom might have in view, and a thousand more may lie hid in the unfathomable abyss of Divine councils. It is well known what numbers in our day reckon the plain preaching of a crucified Jesus mere foolishness ; and how much a preacher is esteemed among those who claim the privilege of the best judges, in proportion as he despises the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and substitutes vain philosophy in place of Christ Jesus the Lord. And he is indeed a stranger to the fashionable world, who does not know that the doctrine of the Spirit's influences has been long the subject of ridicule, and His divine operations, on their account, the warm reveries of an over-heated imagination. Many nominal Christians seem scarce to have heard that there is a Holy Ghost ; and mankind, in general, are fallen into some deep sleep, and fatal security, with respect to another world, and the concerns of their immortal souls. What, then, if God, (willing to rouse a secure generation, to bear testimony to the word of

his grace, and to convince an unbelieving world, that the residue of the Spirit is with him,) hath chosen to appear in so remarkable a manner, to awaken our attention, and that all might see the power of his victorious grace, and hear of his mighty acts? The miracles wrought by our Saviour, served not only to prove his divine mission, being signs of wisdom, power, and goodness, but to spread his fame abroad, that the most distant nations might inquire after him, and search into the nature of that kingdom he was to set up in the world. Had he not come with such mighty signs and wonders, not half so many had heard of him, nor so readily believed on him. And in the present case, had double the number in the parish of Cambuslang been brought home to Christ in a more imperceptible way, these trophies of the Redeemer's victory over sin and Satan would, in a great measure, have lain hid from the eyes of others; whereas, through report of things happening out of the usual course, many flock from all corners; they come, they

see, they hear, they feel, they rejoice. And hundreds now in Christ, cannot be supposed to have gone there, had not their curiosity been excited by these extraordinary circumstances; and consequently, might have still been without God, and without hope in the world. Besides, the visible distress of those under soul-agony, affords a lively instance how dreadful the displeasure of God! how dangerous, how evil, sin; and serve, in place of many arguments, to make surrounding spectators flee from the wrath that is to come. It also gives ministers a glorious opportunity of exhorting their hearers to save themselves from an untoward generation. And on the other hand, souls overpowered with the kindness of a Saviour, falling (with John) at their Redeemer's feet, are a very bright display of his wonderful love, and amazing goodness. The amiable sight attracts our affections, we wish to share in those unspeakable joys, and long for the happy time when frail nature having put on immortality, shall be able to see God and live, spending an eternity amidst

his praises, and under the more immediate shine of boundless compassion, without weariness or fainting, the spirit being then willing, and the flesh not weak. Once more, 'At an extraordinary season,' to use the words of another,* 'wherein God is pleased to carry on a work of his grace, in a more observable and glorious manner, in a way which he would have taken notice of by the world, it seems reasonable to suppose there may be some particular appearances in the work of conversion, which are not common at other times, when yet there are true conversions wrought, or some circumstances attending the work, may be carried to an unusual degree and height. If it were not thus, the work of the Lord would not be so much regarded and spoken of, and so God would not have so much of the glory, nor would the work itself be likely to spread so fast; for God has evidently made use of example and discourse in the carrying it on.' Thus there appear, even to us, many good reasons why Infinite wisdom might choose

* Mr Cooper's Preface to Edwards' Sermon on the distinguishing marks of the Spirit, &c.

that this work should, in some of its subjects, be attended with unusual symptoms. And you see that, in fact, these appearances have answered several valuable purposes ; particularly, have served to awaken the attention of mankind, fixing the thoughts of thousands upon death, judgment, and eternity, these awful issues of time ; and have been the happy means of bringing many to the saving knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus. But after all, we do not pretend positively to say, why God has done this, nor think it at all necessary in support of our argument, that we should be able to assign the reasons of divine conduct. This knowledge is too wonderful for us ; it is high, we cannot attain it. It is but a very small part of God's way we can know. How little a portion is heard of him ! And his paths are many times in the deep waters, not to be fathomed by our shallow faculties, far beyond the reach of human ken.

“By this time, Dear Sir, I am willing to hope you have received some satisfaction as to the matter before us, having, according to your desire, first, represented this affair in its

visible appearance, especially during the time of divine worship, which brings to view thousands of concerned souls prostrate at the feet of mercy, hearing the word with gladness, and anxiously inquiring the way to heaven; many going forth weeping, seemingly bearing precious seed; others returning again rejoicing, bring their sheaves with them. For the truth of this, an appeal is made to those who attend their public ministrations. I have next considered the accounts given by the subjects of this work, as to their inward attainments, and various springs whence their tears of sorrow or joy flow. How far they are scriptural, you may judge, by comparing what is said, with the Sacred records; and as to fact, you will allow that I am *one* witness, and indeed, but one, of the many more competent judges already referred to, men of known veracity, who publish these accounts from the mouths of the persons themselves. I have likewise mentioned some of the almost innumerable blessed effects flowing from these operations upon their minds, which plainly enough evidence themselves the genuine fruits of the

Spirit, and stand confirmed by the joint testimony of their respective ministers, and those who have best access to the nearest view of their whole conduct. I may add, that they are become ensamples to all them that believe; for from them sounds out the word of the Lord, not only in Cambuslang and Kilsyth, but also in every place their faith towards God is spread abroad, so that we need not say any thing. Now, 'their light shines so before men, that others seeing their good works, glorify their Father who is in Heaven.' The several objections brought against this work have also been considered, and, in my apprehension, their weakness discovered.

"Upon the whole, then, there seems here a complete proof, so far as the nature of the thing will admit, that Divine influence is the true spring of this surprising dispensation: A proof not to be shaken by the laugh of an infidel, to whom all religion is a jest, heaven a fool's paradise, and hell a mere bugbear; nor by the reproaches of a blind and ignorant world, merely natural men, who cannot relish such pure joys, nor understand the wonders

of God's grace, they being spiritually discerned ; nor by the misrepresentation of any sect whatever, under the power of prejudice, and a visible bias on account of their present circumstances.

“ In this whole argument, we suppose the truth of Christianity, and take it for granted that men believe their Bibles ; and therefore, upon this supposition, it seems necessary, that whoever would disprove this work, must shew that the account which the subjects thereof give of the inward working of their mind, and its effect upon their lives, are not according to the law and the testimony, nor agreeable to the workings and effects of the Spirit of God therein represented ; or that this work is attended with certain symptoms and circumstances, which make it impossible that it can come from God ; or that the evidence, upon which the truth of the facts are founded, is not such as the nature of the thing requires. and cannot be depended on ;—if they are not able to prove one or other of these things, hard words, scurrilous language, and virulent invectives, will go but little way with an im-

partial inquirer, and may tempt one to think these are used because argument is wanting. For my part, I shall find no leisure, and have much less inclination, to answer libels of this nature ; and shall judge the work of Cambuslang, &c., sufficiently vindicated from the charge of delusion, Satanical influence, and other unrighteous censures ; while it remains true, that many are changed into the divine nature, evidenced by their walking in newness of life, having a conscience (so far as we can judge) void of offence towards God and towards man ; upon these and the like facts our argument is built, and is not to be shaken till they are overturned.

“ I am now come, Dear Sir, to your other request. You ask, What improvement we of this age should make of this extraordinary appearance of God in his sanctuary ? Your question, I apprehend, required a different answer, according to our different opinions and circumstances. It may teach the Associate Presbytery not to limit the Holy One of Israel in the dispensations of his grace, and that God has yet made choice of our Zion,

and delights to dwell within the gates of our Jerusalem ; and should make them more cautious in separating from those whom the Great Master of assemblies condescends to countenance so remarkably with his presence ; it should make them reflect how far their first secession is warranted from the word of God, and for what reason they proceeded still farther to a total separation, even before the Assembly 1740.

“ It should convince unbelievers that there is a Holy Ghost, and make them at length admit the divine original of Christianity. Every soul, brought from a state of nature to a state of grace, may be reckoned a new miracle in confirmation of the gospel. When natural men, the spiritually blind, are enlightened in the knowledge of themselves, and of a Saviour ; when a dead sinner is raised into newness of life ; we have the same signs of power, and a proof of greater goodness, than when sun, moon, and stars were lighted up in the first world, or when a dead corpse is called into being. God, says Paul, ‘ who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,

hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ;' and represents the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, as working in them that believe. If one soul thus enlightened, thus quickened, sets before us a lively instance of boundless compassion and Almighty power, how convincing the argument when great numbers, as in the present case, are thus born at once ! If we reflect but a little upon the present degenerate state of mankind, and think how much sinners are in themselves corrupted and depraved, the power of the Highest will seem necessary to enlighten their benighted minds, to conquer their rebellious will, and quicken their lifeless souls. And if to this you add, that these evil and wicked inclinations of men's spirits, whereby they are enemies to God and all righteousness, are continually cherished and fomented by surrounding temptations to sin, especially by another spirit distinct from their own, that is, the Devil, the 'spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience ;' it will be still more evident, that sinful man must remain in a

state of corruption and slavery, until the Spirit of the living God lift up a standard against this evil spirit, and dispossess him. He alone is able to outwit the policy of hell, and overcome the powers of the infernal host.

“This truth will still farther appear, by observing, that, in fact, mere reason and argument, and all external means whatever, which can be supposed to change the heart, and work a thorough reformation, have hitherto proved ineffectual, when destitute of the concurring influence of the Holy Ghost. Witness the present phenomena of the moral world.

“It will not be much disputed, that there are but very few, comparatively speaking, even in the Christian world, and in these very parts that enjoy the clearest light, and every other advantage,—very few, who deserve the character of religious and good, sober and just, honest and upright, who are in reality the disciples of the meek and holy Jesus. If, then, mere reason and argument, or any other cause exclusive of the Spirit of God, is sufficient to convert men; what means this universal depravation, while scarce any are either willing

or dare to be religious? If heaven and hell, endless glory or everlasting torments, do not move the mind; what motive, what external mean possibly can? what below supernatural influence? It is not sufficient to say, that men do not believe, or do not attend to these things; for if such is, and such always hath been, the thoughtless unbelieving state of mankind, that neither miracles nor reasoning, prosperity nor adversity, could make them reflect, and conquer their unbelief; this, in my apprehension, plainly speaks out the necessity of the Spirit's influence, to awake consideration, and determine to believe. Suffer me to add, that there is nothing more common and rational, than men determining themselves by probable evidence, in opposition to certainty. This is the case in trade and commerce; a real stock is laid out in hope of a greater return. Now, the existence of God and Christ, heaven and hell, being at least possible, and what almost every one will allow highly probable; and it being further plain, that a very faint expectation of endless joy infinitely downweighs all finite good, and that

the remotest possible hazard of eternal misery doth vastly more than overbalance the whole afflictions of this transitory state ; it follows, that (suppose there was nothing in religion but probability, yea, that the doctrine of a future state was only possible,) mankind should be thence more influenced to aspire towards this possible world, than they are to act in the natural and civil life, by the highest degree of probable evidence. Whence, then, are all appearances to the contrary ? Whence is it, that the labourer cheerfully sows his seed into the earth, when he cannot certainly say whether or not it shall prosper ? Why does the seafaring man commit his all to the mercy of winds and waves, upon an uncertain prospect of increasing his stock ; while as to the religious life, almost all men, rather than part with some mere imaginary present pleasure, not essential to the happiness of an immortal spirit, forego the hope of heaven ; rather than quit with a little inglorious worldly ease, run the hazard of eternal disquiet and trouble ? Whence this foolish conduct ? What reason can be assigned for this difference of action in

the civil and religious life, but that such is the enmity of the carnal mind against God and religion, such the incapacity of dead sinners for living to the purposes of heaven and eternity, that neither hopes nor fears, nor any other external means, are sufficient of themselves to conquer this enmity ; that nothing but the Almighty Spirit of God can make them alive unto God ? A great deal more might be said to shew, that the small, the exceeding small number of the righteous, in comparison of the wicked, of the good in respect of the bad, or the long-continued universal corruption of mankind, notwithstanding all means used to reclaim them, cannot be sufficiently accounted for, upon any other supposition but that supernatural influence is wanting to effectuate the mighty work ; and that few direct their eyes towards God, and depend in a right manner upon his assistance. Whence we may again conclude, that every soul translated from the power of Satan into the kingdom of God, is a new attestation to the divinity of a despised gospel ; and consequently, that great numbers (as in the present case)

thus brought at once from darkness to light, demonstrate the power of an enthroned Redeemer, and proclaim aloud that there is a Holy Ghost. If the fact be disputed, that a real change is wrought upon the mind and practice of many stout-hearted sinners, let such unbelievers disprove the evidence on which it is built, or inquire for themselves. It is not a thing done in a corner, or upon a time and in a place no body knows where or when. We attest what has but lately happened; we point out the scene of action, and thus there is no opportunity wanting of detecting the fraud, supposing there was a design to impose. But if, admitting the fact, they will still exclude the Holy Ghost out of our world, it is expected they will tell us by what happy means so many obstinate sinners, formerly unmoved with every argument, have been at once captivated into the obedience of Christ. Let them say, how such hard and rocky hearts have been dissolved, insolent passions subdued, furious lusts mortified, and the most disorderly spirits commanded into calm and quiet. Let them describe whence corrupted

nature is changed into the divine image, the inveterate habits of dark vicious minds are transformed into light and holiness, and the subjects of this work, generally quite other men, other creatures than they have been, so that they move in a new sphere, and their conduct directly opposite to what it once was. If they will exclude the Spirit of the Lord, it is reasonable they should condescend upon some other cause proportionable to such an effect. Until then, we would have Christians to improve this remarkable descent of the Holy Ghost, for the strengthening of their faith and hope as to the accomplishment of all the other promises of the outpouring of the Spirit, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ; and for encouraging their joint supplication, that this whole land, and all the churches of Christ, may be watered with the same blessed dew of heaven. We ought also to admire divine goodness, sovereign grace, long-suffering patience. Hath God come thus suddenly into his temple by a glorious administration of his Spirit, and shall we not

meet him with our humble praises and grateful acknowledgments? It may be said of us as of the Jews of old, 'Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of Hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel,' (Jer. li. 5.) Should not so much undeserved kindness, this wonderful love, melt us down into tears of godly sorrow, and bring us to a free and ingenuous acknowledgment of all our sins, whether personal or of a more public nature? And methinks it is an endearing call to endeavour, in our proper spheres, the reformation of the church and state,—beginning at our own hearts and houses,—that every soul and family, and every place, may be a fit habitation for Jacob's mighty God. It should teach ministers not to despond, though their labours have not hitherto been so remarkably successful, and should powerfully recommend to them, instead of laboured sentences, and harmonious periods, the plain preaching of Christ crucified; the blessed mean, in the hand of the Spirit, whence this work had its first rise, and by which it has

hitherto been so happily carried on. It should make all ranks desirous to feel the Divine influence and share of the heavenly blessing. If this precious season of grace, this happy conjuncture of circumstances, be not improved, they may never all meet again. Now God is striving by his word, by his providence, and by his Spirit; but, if we continue to reject the heavenly call, his Spirit will not always strive with us; there must be an end of patience and forbearance; the mercy-seat may soon remove, a flaming tribunal appear, and the sceptre of peace change into the sword of justice. In these awful moments, they who have despised this mercy of the Lamb, shall perish by the wrath of the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Present opportunities of attaining everlasting life being then for ever lost, over and gone, can only serve to heighten their misery, and render hell more intolerable.

“I shall conclude with observing, that the warm opposition made to this divine work by several good men, through misinformation or mistaken zeal, and the slippery precipice on which they now stand, may teach us that it

is indeed a dangerous thing to censure without proper inquiry. It may serve likewise as a solemn warning against a party spirit, which so far blinds the eyes. It also gives a noble opportunity for the exercise of our Christian sympathy and charity towards these our erring brethren, and should make us long for a removal to Mount Moriah, the land of vision above, where all the true lovers of Jesus shall, indeed, dwell together in perfect unity ; where are no wranglings, no strivings about matters of faith ; where the whole scene of present worship being removed, we shall see no more darkly as through a glass, but face to face ; where perfect light will lay a foundation for perfect harmony and love. It is with peculiar pleasure that I often think of this happy meeting of all the scattered flock of Christ, in the immediate presence of their dear Redeemer, the chief Shepherd and Bishop of their souls ; and have not the least doubt but that my good friend, Ebenezer, shall then enter into the everlasting mansions, with many glorified saints, whom the Associate Presbytery have now given over as the property of

Satan. May they soon see their mistake, and may we yet altogether be happily united in the bonds of peace and truth !

“ I am, with all due respect, dear Sir,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ ALEX. WEBSTER.”

CHAPTER VII.

It is not the object of the present work to enter into any further detailed account of Dr Webster's life, although the eminence of the man, the conspicuous position which he held in society, and the important period in the history of his country in which he lived, might have furnished material for volumes, and justified the undertaking.

His only daughter Anne, of whom mention has already been made, was of most amiable dispositions, and inherited all the fine qualities and sensibilities of her estimable mother. Captain Mingo, whom she married, was a native of Ireland. He came to Edinburgh with his regiment, and paid his addresses to Miss Webster, whose hand he obtained, and the match proved of peculiar advantage to him in advancing his interests. They had a numerous family, several of whom survived their parents.

It may not be uninteresting to the reader to describe the habitation which the distinguished founder of the "Widows' Scheme" occupied.

Dr A. Webster resided in a large self-contained house which he built for himself on the Castlehill. Various descriptions of it may be seen in the topographical accounts of the city of Edinburgh; and it is only to be regretted that modern alterations, called improvements, have swept it away, while it was still in a state of perfect preservation and repair.

For Mrs Webster's sake, whom he so devotedly loved, he was resolved that nothing should be spared in rendering it a residence in every way worthy of its accomplished mistress. It was finished in a style which few private mansions could equal. Built upon a scale of substantial magnificence, its spacious apartments, with their lofty ceilings, gave it an air of imposing grandeur, comfortable to its noble exterior, its fine entrance, and handsome portal. Dr Webster's own room or study was a large oblong or oval wainscotted apartment, with doors all round, finely finished in

the highest style of workmanship, and placed in perfect uniformity. Seven of those doors opened into closets, four of which were small sashed apartments or antechambers, the rest were dark closets or cabinets, wherein were deposited the plans, accounts, correspondence, and all the multifarious papers connected with the Widows' Fund. This room, especially when lighted up, had a grand and noble appearance.

The public rooms also were capacious and lofty. The dining-room and drawing-room, according to the fashion of the period, were wainscot on one side, and adorned with rich paper hangings on the other. The hearths were of marble, and also the mantle-pieces, over which were placed magnificent mirrors set in marble, the marble jambs of the chimney being carried up on each side and across the top of the glasses, so as to form their frames. The situation of the house commanded a splendid prospect to the south and west, to the extent of forty miles ; and these large mirrors were so skilfully placed that this beautiful landscape was also seen reflected in them.

The house was composed of three storeys, besides the sunk storey, the stair to which was of stone; but the steps of the principal staircase were blocks of solid wainscot, with a railing of twisted mahogany, with four twisted pillars at the foot, curiously constructed, and had a fine effect. A physician of eminence, who visited the family of its subsequent proprietor, Mr Brown, was usually long of reaching the drawing-room, and his invariable apology to the ladies for his tardy ascent of the stair was this: "You must excuse my delay; but I cannot help admiring your superb staircase."

The doors and window-shutters were amply secured by large wooden bars which drew out of the wall with iron rings; but a singular circumstance of depredation is said to have taken place in the interior during its brief occupancy after Dr Webster's death, by some temporary tenant or person who had charge of the place—the wainscot steps of the stairs were abstracted, on account of the value of the wood, and common timber substituted in their place. One could hardly think that such a theft could

repay the trouble of the perpetration; but the devices of covetousness and dishonesty are interminable and inconceivable to the honest mind.

Besides the fine view which the elevated situation commands, and with which every visitor to the Castlehill is charmed, the extensive and beautiful garden and terraces belonging to the house were much admired. The modern entrance to this residence acquired the name of "Webster's Court," at the foot of which this stately mansion stood. It is situated a short way above the Assembly Hall, and opposite the water reservoir, and is now designated "Brown's Court."

Dr Webster built another house adjoining this, with stones taken out of the North Loch, which house was intended to be occupied by Mr James Rae, the founder of that branch of surgical teaching—clinical lectures—so useful in giving a practical knowledge of the science, and for which an academical chair has in consequence been provided in the University of Edinburgh, and other schools of medicine ;

and it is related that Mr Fisher, the individual who contracted to do the wood work, was so determined that the house for Dr Webster's own occupation should be perfect, both as to workmanship and material, that he caused to be examined with care every piece of wood employed, and if a knot or a flaw was discernible, the command to the artificers invariably was, "Take that up to Dr Rae's." This house, constructed of the rejected materials, was occupied as a banking house for a time, and afterwards was held for twenty years by the Society of Antiquaries; and Mr Smellie their Secretary lived there during that period.

Dr Webster's own residence, which did ample honour to Mr Fisher's anxious surveillance to have it faultless in the execution of his part of the undertaking, was afterwards purchased by R. Brown, Esq., a very worthy and much respected gentleman, who took a pleasure in keeping the house and grounds in the same handsome and tasteful condition in which the reverend proprietor had left them at his death. The family of Mr Brown, from whom "Brown's Court" derives its name, were obliged

to sell the property under the Act of Parliament for the city improvements. Rash and premature many of the plans of the Commissioners were, and not unfrequently with reckless haste has been demolished that which more deliberate counsel shewed might have been preserved. The first indication that the statute was in force for its destruction was very early on a summer morning. The domestics of the family, by dawn of day, had spread out their bleaching upon the dewy grass to catch the morning sun, when their operations were arrested by sudden and astounding strokes with the sledge hammer upon the outer wall, which speedily levelled a portion of it, and opened a way into the garden, and a large dog that attended the inspector of works first leaped into the breach and took possession.

There were six iron pillars in the green, rivetted into heavy stone pedestals, which were so ponderous that the workmen in taking them down had no power over them, and they were rolled down from the upper garden to the garden below, and ultimately out into the open space. Those six stones have been preserved

in a conspicuous place by being built into the wall of Edinburgh Castle.

The plans of the Improvement Commission being still immature and indefinite, this corner of the ground was all that was encroached upon for a time. The house was thereafter temporarily used as an hospital for cholera patients; and finally, in the year 1837, it was taken down to make way for the Castle Road. Such was the fate of this mansion, from which the moralist might draw a lesson.

It had been constructed with great strength, on account of its elevated site and exposure to the proverbial high winds of Edinburgh. All the large stones in its outer walls and chimneys were rivetted together with iron, that it might resist the storm; some buildings in that locality, erected with less care, having been blown down. But what is reared with laborious solicitude, though its strength is proof against the destroying hand of time, escapes not the hand of the innovator and modern improver, whose decree lays it low in a very brief space.

Major Webster used to visit Mr Brown's fa-

mily always when he came to Edinburgh, and on these occasions he went over all the apartments of his father's house with many awakened interesting associations, no doubt, that can be appreciated better by the heart and the imagination than described by the pen. He would jocularly say to the servants, as he walked through his paternal dwelling, and saw them at their household work of scrubbing, "I will give you half-a-crown for every knot you can find in these floors." The floors were indeed so perfect, and so skilfully finished, that they were like polished dining-tables, and not a seam was discernible in them. Another anecdote is told. Two English gentlemen, apparently military men, were taking a survey of the beauties of the city. They stopped to look at Dr Webster's house. A servant of Mr Brown's, the then proprietor, came up the entrance towards the gate. "Pray," said one of the strangers, "what church is that?" "It is not a church, Sir," said the servant, "but a gentleman's house." "What," said the other stranger, "Is that a private gentleman's house? If it is not a church, or some other

public edifice, it is the likeliest to it that ever I saw."

In this habitation, which we have been describing, many important affairs, both religious and secular, had been discussed and settled; many benevolent schemes organised, and many hospitable entertainments given, not only to those whose brilliant talents adorned the social board, but to many, both friends and strangers, to whom the Christian virtue of ungrudging hospitality was a welcome boon and a cheering encouragement.

But still more it is to be regarded as the abode of domestic peace and harmony—the scene of family concord and affection, where parental solicitude and care were repaid with filial obedience, love, and veneration. Here it was that Thomas, the father of Dr Charles Webster, was educated and trained up. He formed one of the happy circle, but in mentioning him we now turn to a different phasis of the political world. While James Webster and his distinguished son were engaged, as we have seen, in securing the best interests of the Presbyterian Establishment, other branches of

the family inherited the political opinions of their ancestors—their attachment to the Episcopal Church, and their loyalty to their native princes, which was not however a necessary consequence, for many were attached to the Episcopal Church, though not adherents of the House of Stuart, and incurred much persecution on account of their religious principles. In the reign of King William III. the Episcopalians were treated with great severity. They were prohibited from officiating on the Lord's Day, except in their own hired houses, where they received such friends as chose to come to them, and then not unfrequently their dwellings were set on fire and burnt to the ground, and the little flock scattered or imprisoned. For what? For using the Services of the Church drawn from the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments—the Psalms, the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospels—the words furnished and prescribed by inspiration—the Divine command, “When ye pray, say”—petitions and aspirations which believers in all ages have offered up with one heart and mind, to the strengthening and edi-

fication of their souls, but which a rude populace or a priest-ridden multitude despised and abhorred.

In Queen Anne's reign the Liturgy was once more introduced into Scotland, but in 1745 the Episcopalians were again laid under restraints. These restraints were in many cases for political reasons; as those who were attached to the Royal House of Stuart could not at once transfer their allegiance to the new dynasty, while the lineal representative remained. But those causes of political dissension are now for ever at an end.

The members of the Episcopal Church of Scotland are among the Queen's best subjects, as they were that of her royal predecessors in this kingdom. They are loyal by education and hereditary descent. The House of Brunswick, firmly established on the throne and in the affections of the people, are the legitimate successors to that royal but unfortunate line whose just rights were defended by their persecuted adherents, who forfeited everything but their loyalty and honourable principles.

The members of the Episcopal Church never cease to bear in mind that it is written in the living Oracles of Truth, and not a mere dead letter, that God hath declared that by him “kings reign and princes decree authority.”

There are tests of the Christian character which may be regarded as infallible proofs of its genuineness. A man cannot be a true Christian who can hear without uneasiness profane jests made upon sacred persons and things; neither can a man be a true Christian, whatever his religious protestations and professions may be, who is insensible of the blessings of a good government, and who shews himself ignorant of the duties of a good citizen and subject, by stirring up the minds of others against their lawful rulers and protectors.

These murmurers and complainers—complainers against God—discontented with their lot, and encouragers of strife among men, are indubitable indications of the last time,—when a generation should arise who despise authority, and who rail at and speak evil of dignities, especially those spiritual authorities who are invested by Christ with the super-

intendence of his flock. These mockers have no reverence or respect for superiors, and indeed can have none. But they are adepts in the school of fulsome adulation, and speak great swelling words of flattery and admiration of certain demagogues, or of persons in power, whom they extol for the sake of some advantage or gain likely to be derived from them. (See Epistle of St Jude.)

CHAPTER VIII.

BENEFACTORS of mankind should not be forgotten. And yet it often happens that they to whom the community are much indebted for their unostentatious labours and valuable services in the promotion of the true interests of their fellow-men, are allowed to pass away in silence, while some hollow-hearted squabblor about doubtful and unprofitable questions is held up by his partisans to public admiration, and lauded as a true philanthropist, when in reality such are the worst and most dangerous citizens the world can produce. "Agitation is a good thing," is one of those maxims of the present day, that proves its fallacy too often by its results. It is erroneous to think that agitation evolves truth. We may be glad when it settles down into harmlessness merely, and does not render things much worse than they were before. The great advances which

have been made in recent years, through the adaptations of scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions to the common uses of life—inventions which in former ages were regarded as the chimeras of a diseased intellect, or as a criminal offence against the state, that must be expiated in the Fleet prison or the Tower—have given a false claim of superior enlightenment to the present age. From the velocity of transmission from place to place, and the great rapidity with which many handicrafts may now be executed, in place of the slow manual operations that used to engross the time of the artificer, business is transacted and work is done in a surprisingly brief space. But this is chiefly all that is gained by the improvements. The work is not better done; nor is the pleasure of locomotion increased by its velocity, nor knowledge enlarged thereby.

In treating of the life of any man whose time was devoted to the learned professions, if many years are allowed to pass by previous to his biography being undertaken, the man is almost forgotten, and the materials which

would have swelled volumes—the small anecdotes, the hearsays, the petty gossip, and the chit-chat of the period in which he lived,—have lost their zest, or altogether vanished. A bald outline of his history is therefore all that can be given; and it will be found that the history of the generality of mankind, however eminent they may have been in their day and generation, may be comprised in the brief words of the inspired Chronicles of the Monarchs of Israel, which tell the names of those who gave them birth, and whether they did good or evil in the sight of God, and at what age they were gathered to their fathers, and their bones laid to repose in the dust of the ground.

We have traced Dr Alexander Webster's history. His great talents and unwearied benevolence achieved much for his country and his church. His principles were loyal, patriotic, and unwavering. His sagacity and foresight calculated the probable issue of events; and, judging what was best for the peace of the community, used his interest, which was not small, in strengthening the

allegiance of the people to the new Government, while his uncle had in military warfare been maintaining the rights of the ancient House of Stuart. This gallant officer fell in the unhappy contest. His widow did not long survive him. They left two children, a boy and a girl, still in their childhood, and thus deprived by death of their natural protectors in that eventful and disastrous period, Dr Webster took the two interesting young orphans, Thomas and Margaret Webster, under his guardianship, and brought them up along with his own children. Margaret Webster, a lovely and promising young person, died before she attained majority. Thomas Webster having completed his education, turned his attention to mercantile pursuits, and was sent to London to a commercial academy for the furtherance of his knowledge in business. He ultimately settled in the town of Dundee, where he married Grace Mavor, a young lady of fifteen, and of excellent abilities; and, though so young a wife, she was remarkable for her discretion, and the wonderful talents which she possessed for the government of

her house, and the training up of her family. She was the oldest daughter of Mr John Mavor, who possessed considerable property in the neighbourhood of Dundee. In the town itself he had also much house property, as well as public works ; to all of which she succeeded at the death of her father, he having no son, and her only sister dying unmarried at an early age.

Mr John Mavor was a staunch man,—true to his principles as a firm adherent of the Episcopal Church, of which he was a consistent and exemplary member. As to his person, he was an active, small man, with considerable dignity and authority in his aspect and demeanour. Himself and his family suffered much from the restrictions laid upon them in the exercise of their religious worship ; and it is related of him, that as there happened to be in some part of his grounds an opening or alley, through which people were wont to pass, by the sufferance of the proprietor merely, as a short cut into the town, and from this it was claimed by them, in the course of time, as a sort of

right of way, which privilege Mr Mavor good-naturedly allowed, excepting in the case of such persons as he knew had been busy as informants on those who used the Liturgy when assembled for worship in their private dwellings,—for churches they durst have none,—and thereby had brought them under the strong arm of the law. These malignants the old man sternly set his face against. But the only retaliation which he offered to these despicable and officious informants was to hinder them from passing through his land. These he caused to turn back by the way they came; and sometimes he would be seen stepping out himself with an iron goad in his hand, and by an authoritative wave of this formidable truncheon, cause the offenders to turn out of his property and go round by the regular road. Spies are generally cowards; they shrank from the signal, and speedily made their retreat at sight of him and his staff of command.

Thomas Webster's marriage with Miss Mavor took place in the year 1725, and it was in every respect a singularly felicitous con-

nection. Mrs Thomas Webster was a woman of small stature, but finely formed, and of beautiful features. She was exceedingly clever and intelligent; and though married at so early an age, she seemed to possess the experience of one of twice her years, and proved to be a pattern for Christian wives and mothers; and she had the happiness to see her sons distinguish themselves in all those qualities which adorn life and the professions which they chose. Thomas Webster was in person tall and good-looking, bearing a striking family likeness to his cousin, Dr Alexander Webster, who had been to him as a parent or elder brother; and, notwithstanding that he regarded him always with the utmost affection and gratitude, as his benefactor and friend, his early predilections and mature convictions and deliberations made him resolve, that all his family should adhere to the Episcopal Church, although, as he often declared, that, out of regard and veneration for his very eminent kinsman, he always retained a high respect for the Established Church of his native land, which he had an opportu-

nity of foreseeing would prove a blessed institution to the country. He was a man of high principle, and uncompromising honour. His whole conduct was based upon sincerity and truth ; and those over whom his influence extended as a father and a master, were accordingly trained to the same.

Parental influence and authority were not in those days set at nought as they now are ; and what a happy effect in families do the laws of filial obedience to godly parents produce, when they are received and acted upon as the high command of Heaven, to which is annexed a promise that all would wish to inherit.

Mr Thomas Webster had a numerous family, nine of whom, four sons and five daughters, arrived at maturity. Of the five daughters, viz., Jean, Jeally, Elizabeth, Grace, and Margaret, we may briefly notice : The two oldest were married to gentlemen in London, Mr Stuart of that city, and Mr Verney, an opulent merchant at Greenwich. Elizabeth was twice married, first to Mr Fyfe, and secondly to Mr Petrie, both landed proprietors in the

county of Fife. Grace was engaged to Colonel M—— of R——, but afterwards resiled from the match, for what reason my information does not suffice to tell, and she never married. She lived to the advanced age of eighty-seven, and was a woman of great ability and depth of understanding. Her advice and counsel were eagerly sought by those who knew her, and could value the soundness and clearness of her judgment in the affairs of life, of which her discerning mind made her an experienced judge.

Margaret lived to extreme old age, being between ninety and one hundred years at the time of her death, and retained her faculties with their wonted acuteness to the last moments of her life.

Of Thomas Webster's four sons, John George, Thomas, and Charles, we shall give some account in another Chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

MR THOMAS WEBSTER had purchased for his family residence the house of the Lord Viscount Dundee, with the grounds attached, and in that mansion all his family were born.

In mentioning the name of Lord Dundee, although decried by a party as a bloody tyrant, it must be borne in mind he was justly held in veneration by those who connected themselves with the enterprise in which he was engaged. The period was not remarkable for humanity, and could not be so during the fierce conflicts of intestine war, when brother was fighting against brother, and they who ought to be as one, were mercilessly slaughtering each other. The loyal defenders of the rights of their ancient Sovereigns were branded by the fanatical spirits of those days with infamy, while the sufferings which they endured are passed over as nothing—not worthy

a remark—or, if noticed, considered well deserved. Nay, we are told, that a reverend military leader of these factions, stood to superintend the slaughter, in cold blood, of the Royalists—witnessed the scene with evident satisfaction, exultingly rubbing his hands—and expressed his gratification that “the work” was going well on.

In the southern and western counties of Scotland, where Dundee was employed to check the insurrections of the Covenanters, who were urged on by their ministers, who also were their military commanders, he was held in abhorrence, and the most absurd fictions of a supernatural description were circulated regarding him, and easily obtained, in a superstitious age, credit among the ignorant, whose minds, inflamed by the wild exhortations of their belligerent spiritual guides, were alive to impressions the most grotesque and fanciful. And those fabrications to which they gave rise, were dangerous as they were ridiculous. Treason, sedition, and murder, were in many cases the issue; while the stories circulated at that period have been repeated over and over again

by writers of a certain class, to nourish and foster the vulgar prejudices of those who have not had the means of better information. But (I merely mention historical facts) if we look to the noble career of Dundee, in the cause of his Royal master, we must acknowledge him a hero indeed. His undaunted courage, his disinterested zeal, his steadiness of purpose, his intrepidity in the expiring cause of the House of Stuart, cast a brilliancy over the whole enterprise, and dazzled his opponents with the glory of the action, which was one of the most memorable in the history of those times.

His was a courage and activity that surmounted all difficulties, and in whatever aspect we view this great officer, we are astonished at what he was enabled to accomplish under the desperation of the circumstances. Had his noble and spirited advice to King James been followed, an advice dictated by the natural ardour of his disposition, and seconded by the arguments and entreaties of the other peers and officers who stood by the desponding monarch on the eve of his

premeditated flight, the result would have been different. His would not have been a fruitless victory.

King James, dispirited and forlorn, and with a precipitation and timidity that marred his own fortune, had cast the great seal into the Thames, and resolved to leave the kingdom, a step to which the Prince of Orange, by his measures, wished to drive him, and had sent a message to him in his bed at midnight, and commanded him to quit his palace by break of day. The unhappy monarch retired to Rochester, surrounded by his few faithful friends. Dundee thus wisely counselled him.

“The question, Sir,” said he to the King, “is whether you shall stay in England or fly to France? Whether you shall trust the returning zeal of your native subjects, or rely on a foreign power? Here you ought to stand. Keep possession of a part, and the whole will submit by degrees. Resume the spirit of a King. Summon your subjects to their allegiance. Your army, though disbanded, is not dispersed. Give me your commission; I will gather ten thousand of your troops. I will

carry your standard at their head through England, and drive before you the Dutch and their Prince."

It is not a matter of surprise that a plan was laid to assassinate this resolute hero ; and it is to be marvelled at that he escaped the hand of the secret murderer, or a fate like that of the great Montrose. His brilliant but brief career strikes the mind with wonder in contemplating his history. In whatever point we view him, he is the same unflinching, unwavering, unselfish champion in the cause he had undertaken. When he scrambled up the Castle Rock at Edinburgh, to confer with the Duke of Gordon, who held that fortress for his master James ; when he passed on to the north, mustered his troops in spite of all difficulties, and faced the army of the Prince of Orange with such irresistible impetuosity, that it was hewn down and completely routed, he is still the gallant Graeme, the undismayed warrior, who was enthusiastically beloved by his soldiers, and whose memory was still cherished and held in veneration by the Highlanders of a bygone generation, and by

all who could appreciate his heroism and devotion to the cause of his rightful Sovereign, whose hopes perished with the death of the brave Dundee on the memorable field of his gloriously-achieved victory.

In writing an account of Dr Charles Webster, it is possible to eulogize him more than the reader may be disposed to care for ; but it is not possible to mention his character with greater admiration than it deserved. He was in all respects unblameable, adorned with the virtues which become a Christian minister, and which are specified by the Apostle as essential to the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries. Added to those qualities, peculiarly befitting the disciple and teacher of the Gospel, he was possessed of much worldly knowledge and prudence. He was in no respect a novice, as St Paul expresses it, or new convert to the principles which he held, and which renders a man apt to be elated or puffed up with any new honour or applause. But on the contrary, owing to his talent for observation, and his extensive acquaintance

with life and society in all its aspects, both at home and abroad, he was endued with a steadiness of principle not apt to be shaken, and which is so necessary an ingredient in the character of a good or eminent man, and for want of which many betray an inconsistency that blemishes their whole reputation. But estimable as an individual may be, and however much adorned with public and private virtues, it is not after half a century has elapsed that those qualities can be brought prominently into view, as if they had been portrayed at the time when the influence of his character was shed around in the sphere of his ministrations, and when those were living who, from personal knowledge, could appreciate the faithfulness of the delineations. The days of his contemporaries are past. Most of those who loved him, and admired him with that enthusiasm which sincere affection stirred in their hearts, have gone to the mansions prepared for them in the unseen world, and a new era in this world's history has opened, which some regard as the mere morning twilight of the bright meridian blaze

of human science that is yet to enlighten the earth ; while others forebode that it is the precursor to the last stage of things here below, when man's achievements and man's wisdom shall be overthrown. The sober thinker upon these points forms no opinion on a subject which, from Divine authority, he knows to be inscrutable.—Matt. xxiv. 36 ; Mark xiii. 32 ; Acts i. 7 ; 2 Peter iii. 10.

In the mansion that had been owned and occupied by the noted hero, Lord Viscount Dundee, whose history we have just glanced at, and whose energies cast a flash of dazzling brilliancy over the setting destinies of the Royal Stuarts, Charles Webster first saw the light. It was a large commodious building, and with its embrasures, and great gun-holes, indicated the warlike character of the period, when it was necessary to be fortified against attack, and to have the means of defence ever ready at hand. The front approach to the house was by a paved court, secured by a series of ponderous doors or gates, four in number, studded with iron nails. These gates were placed at regular distances from each

other along the court, and had to be all passed through before reaching the entrance door, to which there was an ascent by a flight of nine broad steps, and in the vestibule there hung aloft a great antique lamp with several lights, which at night shone out into the entrance court and shewed the way to the mansion. The apartments within were spacious and cheerful, with plenty of windows; and the various suites of rooms on each floor opened into one another, according to the fashion of building in old times. Below there were two capacious stone kitchens that could have quartered a regiment; and in the principal one of these, which was ordinarily used for culinary purposes, there was a great three-leaved screen, on which was represented, in bold and graphic drawing, martial exploits of bygone years, which Mrs Webster's maids, at their happy and pacific evening employment of their spinning-wheels, were glad to enclose themselves with, to partition off the vastness of the space that was around them. There were abundance of butteries or pantries, and ample cellarage, with which, it is not to be

wondered at, that, in a romantic and war-like age some marvellous legends were connected ; and many years afterwards, when a subsequent generation inherited the place, viz., the grandsons of Mr Thomas Webster, these boys, at their hours of play, with the eagerness of youth for such enterprises, used to dig in these subterranean apartments for treasures which traditionary rumours alleged were hidden there ; and the report was probably not without foundation, although the labours of these juvenile excavators were never repaid with any discovery but that of stones and rubbish and old roots of trees ; but it is probable that what had prompted them to this search was the fact, that about the same period some trenches having been dug in the neighbourhood, where builders were employed, a vast number of valuable rings, and other articles of jewellery had been found by the workmen.

The grounds attached to the house were pleasantly laid out, and diversified with banks of flowers and green slopes and alleys ; and two large gardens at the back, well stocked

with fruit-trees, opened to the meadows beyond.

There are circumstances which it may seem trivial to mention; but, strictly speaking, almost all things in this life that concern families or individuals are trivial, by reason that they are transitory, and pass away as if they had never been. But in families whose hearts are knit together in the bonds of unity and cordial love, and reciprocal feelings and sympathies, it is wonderful how the affections settle, even upon trifling and inanimate objects that may have been cherished by some venerated member of the happy circle, and how they acquire an importance in their eyes. Mrs Thomas Webster had planted with her own hands a famous apple-tree—famous on account of the extraordinary size to which it grew, and the incredible quantity of the finest and largest fruit which it bore. It extended its branches so far that at length a large bough hung over, to the detriment of the ground and wall belonging to a neighbouring proprietor. A portion of this had to be lopped off, and after that operation the

tree seemed to decrease in vigour, and never throve so well. This was much lamented by her family, on account of the dear hands of the beloved parent that had placed it in the ground. Her son, Charles, has often sat under its shade, reading and meditating, and no doubt allowing his contemplative imagination to expatiate over the wide fields of futurity, that were yet to be opened up to his experience as he went forward in the journey of life.

Charles Webster was the youngest child of Thomas Webster. He was born on the 2d day of February 1750, the same year in which was born the "hero of Barossa," with whom he was so nearly connected; and at his baptism he was named after the Prince Charles Stuart, to whose interests all his family were devotedly attached.

He thus being the youngest of a numerous family, was the baby and the pet of the house when other members of the family were grown up. He was baptized by Bishop Rait, the bishop of Brechin, a truly excellent and pious man, and in all respects what Holy Writ de-

clares that a bishop ought to be. He lived at a period when a particular jealousy existed in the minds of Presbyterians with regard to those who held the episcopal office ; and that he might not appear to intrude into the sphere of other men's labours, or to seek proselytes, he refrained from receiving or making private visits ; but every day at noon he publicly walked for an hour or two in the High Street, on " the crown of the causeway," in the town of Dundee, where he dwelt ; and he let it be known, that if any one had anything to say to him he was there for the purpose of hearing it, and of imparting his advice or instructions openly, and before the world.

Charles Webster was trained up in those principles which, in large sections of human society in the Christian world, are obsolete, or regarded as unimportant, viz., filial obedience, fidelity to lawful rulers, decision in religious principles, and firm adherence to the primitive doctrines and discipline of Christianity. Nurtured, as all his family were, in the bosom of the Episcopal Church, he had the advantage of a thoroughly scriptural and Protestant

education in every sense, and endued with a liberal and enlightened spirit, equally removed from the dark and gloomy intolerant bigotry of bygone ages, and from the fanaticism of new sects, ever carried away by that enthusiasm by which weak minds are so easily caught and fascinated, and which is generally mixed up with great heat of temper, ignorance, credulity, morosity, and self-conceit.

Of Dr Charles Webster's boyhood and youth little has been preserved. Those who might have furnished many anecdotes are long since dead; and even very few are still alive who knew him in more advanced years; but those who had that privilege, who do survive, remember when he came forth the accomplished gentleman and elegant scholar, who adorned the best circles, both in his native land and on the Continent, and whose society was eagerly sought, and with whom more intimate acquaintance tended only to increase more and more their admiration of his character.

Of Dr Webster's elder brothers it may be briefly stated: John, the eldest, was a great corn-merchant, but embarking in some very

extensive speculations, in connection with some other gentlemen, which did not turn out successfully, and involved him in great pecuniary loss, he took sanctuary for a time at the Palace of Holyrood, Edinburgh, till some arrangement was entered into with his creditors. He was twice married, and had two daughters by his first marriage. Those two young ladies were extremely beautiful, but delicate in health and slightly deformed, in is said, from the absurd and injurious fashion which their mother caused to be adopted, of lacing too tight. They did not survive their father.

George, the next oldest brother, we shall have occasion to speak of more at large in the course of these pages.

Captain Thomas Webster, the third brother, had entered the navy at a period when the affairs of India were in an interesting position, and opened up abundance of opportunity for enterprise. He was a bold and brave, high-spirited officer, and strict disciplinarian, but withal kind, warm-hearted, and humane, although some of those who served under him

considered him at the time too rigid in enforcing order and obedience, but they afterwards regarded with admiration his decision of character and regularity, on both of which qualities so much of the success of human affairs depends. Captain Webster married an English lady of good family, and died in London, leaving an only son, who took orders in the Church of England.

CHAPTER X.

CHARLES WEBSTER's brother, George, is a character that deserves to be mentioned with more than ordinary respect. As a private Christian and a gentleman none could have adorned domestic and social life more than he did. He was honoured and looked up to by all ranks. He was beloved by his acquaintances as a sincere unwavering friend, on whose counsel they could rely, as safe, just, and impartial, and whose whole life and deportment was one bright and beautiful example that it would be well to imitate. His honour and veracity became proverbial. His oath in courts of law or justice, where business might occasionally call him, was never required. "Do you say so, Mr Webster?" was generally all that the arbiter said. His simple affirmation was enough. He never spoke ill

of any one, nor allowed any of his family to do so in his presence. Curiosity about the affairs of others he repressed. "What would it avail you," he would say, "to know all those things? Would it make you wiser, happier, or better?" His charity to the poor was unbounded, but judicious and unostentatious, and he was regarded by them as a father and a friend. He devoted a portion of his grounds to the culture of all manner of medicinal plants and herbs. He had a natural taste for medicine, though he never studied professionally the healing art, and he had fitted up in his house a room as a private laboratory, stocked with all kinds of medicine, from which he supplied the poor. His prescriptions were often successful, never injurious; and if we can believe that a Divine blessing attends the Christian charity of a good man, we may be sure that a blessing attended his—a blessing both to himself and to those to whom he ministered.

The applications made to him from all quarters were innumerable, as may be well supposed; and many were the letters solicit-

ing his advice when the distance or the applicant's ill health prevented a personal attendance. Certain hours were allotted to the discharge of these benevolent labours, which his regularity, early rising, and judicious disposal of time, enabled him to accomplish.

He was extensively engaged in the export of green linen and Osnaburgs, a branch of commerce to which many gentlemen at that time directed their attention, supplying the foreign markets and colonies. He was what was called a green cloth merchant, and wholly engaged in the export trade. The Trustees' Office, an institution of great advantage to this country, both on account of the manufactures and fisheries of Scotland, had been established in 1727, and in consequence of this the bounties granted upon the exportation of linen caused this valuable branch of manufacture to rise to great importance.

His playfellows at school were afterwards the friends of his mature years. The friends of his youth were his friends throughout life, and of these there were four in particular who bore the same Christian name as himself,

and they were proverbially called "the five Georges," viz., George Maxwell, George Webster, George Yeaman of Murie, George Dempster of Donichen, M.P., and George Haliburton.

George Webster was married on the 12th July 1761, the eighth Sunday after Trinity, at six o'clock afternoon, to Elizabeth Spens or Spence, oldest daughter of James Spens and Anna Duthie.

It may not be generally known or remembered, that the Scotch Reformers not only appointed a form for the celebration of marriage, but expressly appointed by "The First Book of Discipline," *That marriage should only be solemnized on Sunday after sermon*, and this was universally observed, and the introduction of marrying on other days was regarded as a remarkable innovation which required the deliberations of the General Assembly. In the General Assembly held at Edinburgh, July 7, 1579, it was proposed to the Assembly as a question to be considered, *whether it was lawful to marry on week days, a sufficient number being present and joining preaching there-*

unto. The Assembly came subsequently to the resolution that it was lawful.

If the excellent of the earth ought to be had in remembrance, it will seem a sufficient apology to those who are like-minded with that estimable lady Mrs George Webster, that particular notice be taken of her in this narrative. She was so remarkable for her piety and goodness, that she was regarded with sincere esteem and respect by all who knew her. She was exemplary in every relation of life. Her's was the hand of the diligent, and her's was that fervency of spirit that always serveth the Lord, doing all to his glory. Not slothful, but active, as the faithful industrious matron and housewife should be. She rose betimes to her duties.—The first were to her Maker and Preserver; and issuing from her chamber with her morning devotions still upon her lips, she proceeded to her garden, took her accustomed early walk, her heart and meditations still ascending on high in holy aspirations for more grace and more strength to serve her God aright. Her soul fervently responded the language of the poet,

“ We in the bloomy, breezy garden trace
Nought but the emanations of Thy love.”

She was, indeed, a beautiful example of domestic piety and virtue. And she was also beautiful and dignified in aspect; and the nobleness of her demeanour was so blended with modesty and sweetness, that she was truly lovely in all eyes, and endeared to the hearts of all who had the privilege of her acquaintance.

Of the date of her birth I am not certain, but it must have been in the year 1731, as she was baptized on the 5th September of that year, as appears by the records of the church in Montrose, of which town she was a native. Her father, James Spens, like his famous ancestor, was of the naval profession. He was a proprietor in the town of Montrose, and also owned some ships.

It may not be devoid of interest to mention that by him she was descended from the renowned Admiral famed in Scottish song, Sir Patrick Spens, who was sent upon a foreign embassy to conclude a treaty of marriage between the daughter of the Scottish Sove-

reign Alexander the Third and the Norwegian King, as related in the ballad that bears his name.

“ The king sits in Dunfermline toun
Drinking the bluid-red wine ;
‘ Oh, whar will I get a skeely skipper
To sail this ship o’ mine ?’

“ O up and spak an eldren knight,
Sat at the king’s right knee,
‘ Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That ever sailed the sea.’ ”

* * * *

The circumstances, as far as can be gathered from the history of that remote period, were as follows :—

The Monarchs of Scotland chiefly resided at their palace of Dunfermline, from the time of Malcolm Canmore to the reign of Alexander the Third, whose daughter Margaret was espoused to Eric, King of Norway.

The princess departed from her native shores on the 31st day of July 1281, and was conveyed to Norway in a style befitting the high occasion.

“ The ship it was a gudely ship,
The tap mast was o’ gowd ;

And at ilka tack o' needle wark
A silver bell it jowed."

The lady was attended by a splendid retinue of knights and nobles—the flower of the nation, who, after the celebration of the marriage, and having spent some time at the Court of Norway, on returning to Scotland were shipwrecked, and this noble train who had escorted the princess, all perished half-way back from Norway to Aberdour, a small sea-port of Scotland, on the north side of the Frith of Forth. Scottish history does not furnish a more affecting event, an occasion of festivity and joy thus suddenly changed into a catastrophe of the deepest woe.

There is to the east of Aberdour a fine tract of hard white sand, to which for extent and beauty there is nothing equal in Scotland. Sir Patrick Spens is described as walking on this sand near his own residence when the king's orders came to him.

"The king has written a braid letter,
And signed it wi' his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the sand."

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“ To Norroway, to Norroway,
To Norroway owre the faem ;
The king's daughter to Norroway,
It's thou maun tak' her hame.”

* * * *

Sir Patrick being thus appointed to command the expedition, felt some dismay at the thoughts of navigating the seas at an unpropitious time of year, for at that early period, considering the imperfect state of navigation, it was reckoned almost impossible to sail in the winter, and he knew that after spending some time at the Norwegian Court, two or three months as was proposed, it would throw them into that season before they could return.

The order, however, is express. He gives the word of command to prepare the fleet. He takes leave of his wife, and they set sail.

But alas ! his fears are too truly verified by the sad destiny that overtook them in the boisterous seas on their return to their native land.

“ Sir Patrick he is on the sea,
And far out ower the faem ;
And five and fifty Scots lords' sons
That langed to be at hame.”

This dire event is touchingly related in these concluding verses.

“ Oh lang, lang, may the ladyes look,
Wi’ their gown tails owre their croon,
Before they see their ain dear lords
Come sailing to Dunfermline toun.

“ Half owre, half owre to Aberdour
Its fifty fathoms deep,
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
And the Scots lords at his feet.”

The tradition of Mrs George Webster’s forefather was so familiar in her family that the children, with the juvenile conceptions of the retrospective, had the impression that he was their grandfather, and not a remote ancestor that the lapse of centuries had closed upon and veiled in obscurity.

Mrs George Webster was a steady and attached member of the Episcopal Church, as were also the whole of her family, both by the father and mother’s side, and she continued so during the whole course of her useful and exemplary life. The family also in their political opinions had a strong and hereditary predilection for the House of Stuart, and encountered no small share of the troubles

peculiar to the times. Her mother, Mrs Spens, the beautiful Anna Duthie, was much celebrated in those days, both for her personal attractions and her devotion to the Royal cause. Bishop Strachan, the Bishop of Brechin, a near kinsman of the family, and who succeeded Bishop Rait in that diocese, used to mention her as a very remarkable person, and in after years narrated to her children, who were his own first cousins, many notable instances of her heroism and intrepidity of character; to which encomiums passed upon the memory of their beloved and excellent mother, they naturally listened with pride and satisfaction.

Notwithstanding the noble-hearted courage which she displayed in the many situations of trial and danger to which she was exposed, she was so feminine and gentle in her deportment, so mild and beautiful, which, together with the uncommon whiteness of her skin, and the extreme delicacy and transparency of her complexion, rendered her almost like an ethereal being. And she, defenceless, had to maintain her ground in those disastrous

times against the attacks of the rudest assailants.

Her husband, from his connection with maritime affairs, was often from home, and her household lived in a state of constant trepidation and fear. She alone bore up with undismayed resolution and fortitude, when fifty soldiers took up their quarters in Captain Spens's house at Montrose during his absence, lodged and regaled themselves to their own hearts' satisfaction, and, ere they quitted the habitation, ransacked every corner, and plundered it, leaving its unprotected inmates to its blankness and desolation when they ruthlessly had carried off their booty. But its loyal-hearted mistress, like the rest of her party, thought the cause for which they suffered identical with all that was right and honourable, and therefore endured with unyielding constancy and firmness, nor deemed it too much that they had sacrificed for their principles.

The invasion of the domestic hearth, the demolition of the dwelling, the laying waste the grounds, the consternation and dismay which pervaded all hearts, was a scene that

was consummated in the dissevering of the closest ties of blood and kindred. Brethren and fathers, husbands and sons, were remorselessly hunted out and wrested from their homes, and sent to the prison, or to the tribunal of death to suffer by the hands of the executioner.

Nor did the relatives of Mrs Spens escape. Her brother and nephew were taken prisoners in the field of battle ; their property confiscated, and the youth and his father were beheaded at Carlisle. The wife of the elder prisoner, on hearing of the sentence passed upon them, ordered horse, and rode express from Montrose to take a final leave of her husband and her son before they suffered. On arriving at Carlisle on her dismal errand, her waiting-woman, who was in her escort, attended the toilet of her mistress, and, on uncovering her head, saw to her amazement that her hair, which she had dressed the day before, ere they commenced their journey, and which was then as black as jet, had become as white as snow. This is a memorable instance of the effects of the excess of grief—

that bitterness of sorrow that smites the heart with an irrecoverable blight.

Many tragical events might be related, even in connexion with one single family at that period, but we pass on to state, briefly, with regard to Mrs George Webster, that she had three sisters and a brother, viz., Anna Spens, who died unmarried at an advanced age ; Maude, who married Captain Paul, an Englishman, connected with the sea. Isabella, her youngest sister, married her cousin, James Lyell of Carcray, the brother of Charles Lyell of Kinnordy, in the county of Forfar.

Charles Lyell is too well known in the scientific and literary world to require any particular mention here, and yet it would seem an omission not to pay some tribute of respect to his genius and his talents. After completing his education, partly at St Andrews and partly at Cambridge, he returned to Kinnordy, where he passed his time in those pursuits which have obtained for him a distinguished position among men of science. He has the merit of discovering many British plants for-

merly unknown ; and his translations from Dante, with his illustrative notes, display a profound knowledge of Italian history and literature. His very eminent son, Sir Charles Lyell, the geologist, shews that the genius of his accomplished father has descended upon him.

Mrs George Webster's only brother, Captain Spens, had entered the army at an early age, and was a young man of much promise. The last time he was seen by any of his family was when he was passing through the town of Dundee with his regiment, when the troops were ordered abroad.

His sister Elizabeth was sitting at a window, in the house of Dempster of Donichen, looking, along with others, at the military marching through the streets, when a young lady of that family called to her to observe that officer who was waving his hand to her as he passed. Miss Spens recognised her brother. His servant at the same instant came to the door with a hasty message from his master bidding her farewell. But she had no opportunity of interchange of words with him. He passed on

with his troops, and she saw him no more. A short time afterwards accounts came home that he had fallen in battle, to the great grief of his friends, to whom he was endeared by many estimable qualities. This brave young officer was favourably known to Lord North, and he was much attached to that nobleman, who was courteous and kind in his manners.

Previous to the engagement in which he fell Captain Spens had executed a deed of settlement, appointing Lord North his executor. One clause of his will directed one hundred pounds sterling to be paid out of his effects to each of his four sisters. His last bequests were faithfully discharged. The excess of sorrow felt for his loss, and the deep emotion which his sister Elizabeth betrayed whenever his name was mentioned, made her family forbear ever making any illusion to him in her presence, and thus the memory of him passed away in mournful silence, by reason of which many interesting particulars, both with regard to himself and the public events of the period in which he was engaged, have passed into oblivion.

Those who have contemplated the results of the long and destructive wars of that age, and compared them with the results of the subsequent era of tranquillity which has followed, become naturally inspired with a love of peace and liberty; and military glory loses its attractions, and appears rather an object of dread than of admiration. The successes at that period of the continental warfare, to which we refer, led to no advantage on either side. But it was long ere the eyes of the English were opened to their own interests, and ere they found they were engaged in an unequal contest, burdening themselves with taxes for conquests which they could neither enjoy nor preserve.

The popular ditties of any particular period are not unfrequently the truest index of the feelings that lacerate the hearts which have been bereaved of the objects most dear to their affections. The life's blood of many have flowed in struggling to maintain the rights of their country's dependencies, whose only requiem was in the ballad sung in the street, or chanted in mournful lullaby in the nursery to soothe to sleep the unconscious

infant, bereft, perhaps, of its own and its family's only stay.

“ Germanie’s wars so may I ban,
They have twinned Scotland of many a pretty man ;
They have twinned me of my brothers three,
Woe, woe be to the wars of High Germanie.”

CHAPTER XI.

CHARLES WEBSTER, being the youngest of a very numerous train of brothers and sisters, was of course but a child when some of these events, connected with the elder branches of the family, took place. At the time of his brother George's marriage, he was but ten years old, and from the fear of losing his brother when he drove off with his bride, he ran eagerly after the carriage for a considerable way, till a servant overtook him and brought him back.

He commenced his public studies at the High School of Dundee, where several persons who afterwards made a figure in life, were his schoolfellows or playmates. Among these was Major Fletcher, whose facetious vein of wit very early began to display itself. When a very little boy, it is related that, by the carelessness of the cook, some extraneous ingredient had been allowed to fall into his break-

fast porridge. The child, after partaking of the repast, said his accustomed grace, and with a gravity that shewed the true characteristic of inherent humour, though bordering on the profane, solemnly returned thanks "For porridge and the coal cinders."

Charles Webster, like most youths of fine dispositions and good abilities, was the favourite and oracle of his companions.

Three or four of his class-fellows usually walked out for him to his father's house, that he might accompany them to school. One morning they had come for him with more urgent haste than ordinary, and hurried him off before he had time to find his hat, which it is alleged some wag of the party had put out of the way. He had arrived at the streets of Dundee before he was aware of the circumstance, and some others of his school-fellows who met him there, called out to him, "Charlie Webster, Charlie Webster, where's your hat?" Ashamed at his mistake, he hastened home again to search for the hat and then repaired to school. This passed on without further remark; but next morning as he went to school again, to

his utter dismay, as he passed by a house near which he had discovered his blunder the day before, a voice from a window called out to him, "Charlie Webster, Charlie Webster, where's your hat?" and followed up the interrogation with a volley of the most provoking, impudent laughter. Affronted at the salute, he passed on blushing with shame. But day after day the same salutation met his ears as he passed and re-passed. Alone, or with his companions, he never came within view of his unseen tormentor than he was thus hailed in the sharp shrill tones of mischievous fun, "Charlie Webster, Charlie Webster, where's your hat?" and then the loud, chuckling derisive laugh that accompanied the taunt, was worse than all.

So thoroughly abashed was he at the circumstance, that he changed his route and stole round by another way to escape his innocent persecutor—a parrot. It remains, however, one of the many illustrations of the acuteness of the bird, and proves that the inferior creatures have, in some indefinite degree, powers of memory, observation, and

reflection, akin to those possessed by the human race. Indeed, in the quickness of the external senses, some of them excel our own species, and they have a reason of their own that sometimes makes approaches to human intelligence.

Charles Webster chose two of the learned professions, viz., Divinity and Medicine, and in both professions he attained to eminence. As a physician, he was a highly successful practitioner—as a clergyman he was equally distinguished, his private life and his public being in remarkable and harmonious unison with each other. Enthusiastic admiration of his learning and eloquence followed him wherever he went, and yet he never was elated. The most genuine and characteristic humility invested him, and enhanced the other Christian graces with which he was endowed in a remarkable degree. He was the object of sincere love and esteem, as well as of veneration and respect to all who knew him. There never was a man who was so much courted and beloved, who was so perfectly free from vanity. He possessed great popularity with-

out an effort to obtain it. Like his cousin, Dr Alexander Webster, he had a noble nature, a great mind, a vigorous understanding, and a heart overflowing with universal benevolence.

To give an exact account of Dr Webster's college life, is not within the power of the author, as the length of time which has elapsed, and the difficulty of obtaining accurate dates and other facts, would be an insurmountable task ; and even if it were practicable, would not repay either the reader or writer the labour of inquiry. It may be sufficient to state that he attended various universities. He commenced his theological studies at St Andrews and Aberdeen. These, and his medical studies, he afterwards prosecuted partly at Edinburgh, and partly in England. He thereafter travelled on the Continent, where he visited the most famed schools of medical science, and perfected himself in that department, as well as made himself acquainted with the general literature of Europe, and acquired a familiarity with several of its modern languages.

His attainments were of the highest order. His close application to learning, and his ex-

tensive opportunities of acquiring it; his practical knowledge of life and human affairs; his acquaintance with men distinguished in the various departments of public life, as well as in literature and science, and his familiar intercourse with the most polished circles, both in his own country and in foreign parts, were among the advantages which he possessed; and his professional abilities, together with his manifold acquirements in other provinces of literature, gave him a high pre-eminence among his contemporaries, and obtained for him at a comparatively early period of life, the epithet (not, I would venture to say, in his case unwarrantably bestowed) of “The great Dr Webster.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE state of religious matters as regarded the Church in Scotland to whose service Charles Webster very early devoted himself, was depressed in the extreme. Her services had been interdicted at the instance of the popular arguments of stones and mud, cudgels and camp-stools, and other weapons more formidable than those missiles. Her altars were overthrown, her harps were hung upon the willows, and her dismayed, but not forsaken children, were waiting patiently for a better time. Influential friends tried to have the privileges of their worship restored. Their bigoted and vehement opponents strenuously attempted to frustrate any measure of the sort, both by appeals to the legislative assemblies of the nation, and by a more questionable mode, viz., addresses to the Divine Being to prevent the restoration of the services of the Church. Their houses of prayer were shut up, or desecrated and demolished,

and only three or four persons durst meet together for divine worship in any one place.

It frequently happened, that, to evade to a certain extent this legal enactment, when anxious to have the benefit of some devout man's ministrations, friends would assemble as many as conveniently could in a private house, and four persons only would meet in each apartment. The doors of all the rooms then being left open, the clergyman stood in the lobby, or any other convenient place, where he might best be heard by the different parties. If their adversaries, under these circumstances, broke in upon them to seize them at their devotions, they durst not legally do so, seeing that there was not assembled together in one chamber more than the prescribed number of four.

Such was the aspect of affairs in the Church; but the more it was depressed and overborne by popular clamour and ignorance, the more firmly and decidedly did its members adhere to its doctrines and worship as established at the great Reformation, and sealed by the blood of its martyrs. For Scot-

land was indeed illuminated by the "torch kindled in England," whose bright beams spread over the land, and with the prospect of whose never-to-be-extinguished light, Latimer, at the stake, cheered his dying brother.

Various sects and parties which arose after that period have all had their historians who have told their tale as it suited their prejudices, and probably as it appeared to them the truth; for it is not to be supposed that a partisan deliberately states what is false. Candour and charity, and a better knowledge of human nature, forbid us to think this; but the man who does not possess himself of right information, and whose mental vision is clouded with prejudices, must make representations which, though true to his own conception of things, appear as misrepresentations to others who know differently. To those, however, who are disposed to view things through the same distorted medium as himself, his delineation acquires the character of a just and true picture. A passing glance at historical facts may be taken as we go along.

The Reformation was established in England, as every one knows, before it was begun in Scotland. The great doctrines of Divine Revelation, and the saving truths of the Gospel, whose precious light had been long struggling to break through the gloom of moral darkness and superstition, were shedding a benign influence over the land, and gladdening the hearts of those who had been sitting in the region of the shadow of death.

The joyful sound of a free salvation was indeed the celestial music that wooed them from the deep and dark valley up to the realms of day. The truths which Wickliffe taught to his flock at Lutterworth were no longer confined to a single parish, but were preached from every pulpit, and like *his* ashes, which were thrown into the river, were disseminated apace throughout the mighty current of society.

Secular power was made wonderfully to subserve God's purposes in those times. Henry the Eighth shook off the Papal yoke in the year 1534. His strong hand achieved at once what

less despotic princes could not have accomplished, viz., emancipation from the thralldom and pretended headship of the usurper of Rome ; and a change was effected in religion without overthrowing the constitution. England was blessed with pious and learned ecclesiastics, who, under the powerful protection of the bluff monarch were enabled to rescue the Church from the load of superstition, false doctrines and idolatrous forms, with which it was oppressed and degraded, and almost altogether deprived of vital power and godliness. Henry had no sooner done his part, such as it was, in the work, than he endeavoured to transmit the principles of the Reformation to Scotland. He accordingly sent the Bishop of St David's to his nephew James, with books written in English for his special instruction in the genuine doctrines of the Christian religion, and entreated him to abrogate the Papal jurisdiction in his dominions ; no doubt wishing to strengthen his cause and keep his own kingdom safe from opposition in that quarter, and to draw him off from combining with the French interests.

Though this embassy of St David's had no success, yet Henry desisted not from writing letters to James, earnestly recommending the subject of the Reformation to his attention. Henry was equally urgent with his subjects, and pressed the same matter upon the nobles and gentry, and all who had influence, either at the court or in the provinces; and his designs were understood and approved of by all the friends of the Reformation. Seeing that remonstrances with James failed, Henry became very earnest for a meeting with him to devise measures for the furtherance of the cause.

The Scottish friends of the Reformation were anxious for this interview, and York was the place appointed for the congress; but James followed other counsels, and the interview agreed to on two occasions did not take place. Henry's displeasure was excited against James for thus disappointing him twice, and he raised a war against him. The unsuccessful management of this war on the part of James and his subjects, who were backward to engage in it, the nobles being

disappointed that he had not fulfilled his engagements with Henry, threw James into a low fever, of which he died. Had he followed the counsel of his best subjects, this calamity, humanly speaking, might have been averted. But the Scottish clergy, jealous of English influence, had urged the unfortunate monarch to undertake this war, persuading him that he would certainly defeat the heretical prince. They had prevented the interview and drove him on to hostilities with the English monarch, and frustrated every pacific measure.

These matters are not sufficiently adverted to by historians. After James's death, Henry persisted in his favourite scheme of advancing the Reformation in Scotland as well as in his own kingdom, nor did he neglect any means to further this end. The Scottish nobles who were taken prisoners by his troops at Solway Moss, these being above thirty noblemen and gentlemen of distinction, he took care to have lodged in the best style with such persons as could instruct them thoroughly in the Reforming principles. Cassilis and others of the nobility imbibed at Lambeth, under Cranmer's

ministrations and teaching, the pure doctrines of the Word of God. The seeds of Divine knowledge thus imparted to them, produced, we are told, a great harvest in Scotland ; and those noble prisoners, after being well-instructed in the principles of the Reformed faith, became very differently impressed with the change that had been effected in England to what they had been before ; the clergy in Scotland having represented it to them in a light quite contrary to that of truth ; for they, to wit, the clergy, were in great consternation lest the English influence should extend to North Britain, and they were not only by various arts and stratagems, the instigators of the King to break faith with Henry, but also when another measure was devised, viz., that of a match between Prince Edward and Mary, the infant sovereign of Scotland—a plan which King Henry had very much at heart, and to which he obtained the consent of his Parliament, they were in still greater dismay and perplexity, and inveighed against this match in their sermons so fiercely that they made the pulpit, as it has too often been in

Scotland, the rostrum of agitation and political debate, rather than the chair from which should emanate nothing but gospel truth and instruction. They inflamed the minds of the people and used all possible means to excite the populace to tumults and commotions, and caused them to insult and abuse the English ambassador when he came to treat of that important matter—the union of Edward and Mary. These were but the beginning of sorrows in the unhappy struggles which followed after that period.

All this clamour and opposition created about the match, was one of those popular ebullitions that is often uselessly raised by priestly influence acting upon the untamed passions of the ignorant masses. The two young heirs of the British crowns were appointed to a different lot to that proposed for them by human wisdom, and it is needless to speculate on what might have been Mary's destiny had this scheme been carried into effect. She, the worst used of Sovereign princes, was doomed to a life of bitter suffering, with scarcely one mitigating circumstance

in her unhappy fate. And King Edward, the youthful saint, was happily, in the full spring-time and bloom of his early piety, removed to the paradise of his God and Saviour, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.

A heavy cloud overcast the two nations when Mary the bigot, the bloody, unhappy tyrant, ascended the throne of England. Her sanguinary work was cut short by her death, and her cruel career was mercifully a brief one.

The Queen-Dowager of Scotland, if not with cruelty, did at least with policy and subtlety impede the work of the Reformation ; and her daughter, unfortunate from the cradle to the grave, had her lot cast amid the distractions of conflicting parties, and was betrayed and misled by the counsels of all.

Combining with the French interests led to much disaster. She, by their advice, as next heir to the English crown, assumed the styles and titles of Queen of England, and rendered Elizabeth, whose title was questioned, her implacable enemy.

If she ever heard the doctrines of the Reformation preached, it was not the persuasives of the Gospel that might have reached the heart, but the declamations of fierce debate, violent arguments, and wild gesticulations, which terrify but do not usually convince or convert.

The sea of agitation began to heave its billows in Scotland, and the mass of society was a vortex of ignorance, excitement, and wild passions. Elizabeth urged on the Reformation in that kingdom as her father and brother had done ; and from that period England begins to date her glories and pre-eminence among the nations of the world, and to take her true position as the head of civil and religious liberty, and the bulwark against spiritual despotism. To secure the interests of her own kingdom, Elizabeth naturally enlisted the affections of the people of Scotland on her side. They plighted their faith that they would stand by her if she would grant them suitable assistance ; and thus having solicited and obtained her protection, the great Protestant work was carried on under her

auspices; and by the aid of English arms, counsels, and money, the French were expelled out of Scotland, and when our Reformers, by her help, had gained an ascendancy, her crown was secured to her as far as the Scottish Protestants could secure it. And one of the articles of the treaty that was entered into at that time, 1560, was that the Queen of Scots should not thereafter usurp the titles of England and Ireland; and that she should delete the arms of those two kingdoms out of her scutcheons and household staffs.

But I forbear to enter into details which are familiar to every one; I merely advert to those facts, which make it apparent that unity and unanimity were the best safeguards of the two nations against the usurpations of Rome and all their attendant evils.

The Church being purified, and the doctrines, usages, and authority of the primitive ages being restored, that fearful antagonist, popular clamour, which afterwards arose in Scotland, could not change the opinions of those who adhered to the Reformed Church, and valued her sacred services and divine in-

stitutions above any human invention that could be devised.

The new forms of church government framed to suit the Genevan Republic, being introduced into Scotland, produced convulsions which it is not the province of this work to narrate. The insurrections and tumults of the populace, in some of the western counties in favour of those forms, could with no more truth be called the voice of the nation, than could the clamour of a faction in our own day for the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, or for the repeal of the Corn Laws, be justly called by that name.

Unseemly contentions arose about what was profanely called settling the affairs of Christ's kingdom. Doctrines were set forth inconsistent with the rules and happiness of civil society, and which were subversive of domestic peace in families. Tenets were published which dissolve the ties that connect subjects with their rulers. And like the Jesuits, who assume to themselves more independence than other religious bodies, they became like them, the formidable enemies of

Episcopal jurisdiction. This state of things ended in the overthrow of the throne. But the nation soon got a sufficient sample of the reign of anarchy and confusion to wish ever again to experience either ecclesiastical power or democratic force exalted upon the ruins of civil government.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE of the chief ornaments and characteristics of Charles Webster, was a charitable, a gentle, and a liberal spirit.

Although fully persuaded in his own mind, he yet exercised to others that liberality which he felt every man was entitled to from his fellow. His sentiments in that respect are thus elegantly expressed in one of his printed sermons preached at Edinburgh. "We cannot be too thankful that we live in a land where, though not of the Establishment, in which there are many ornaments, as of science, so of piety and virtue, we can worship God as our consciences, our habits, our situation may direct.

"Our own form of worship is justly endeared to us by many considerations; but while we prefer it, and study to maintain pure that faith

which we believe to have been delivered to the saints, if we consider the general weakness and various ranks of the human intellect, the diversity of temperaments and tastes, the effects of different impressions, associations and habits through life, we shall be more disposed to regulate the influence of these upon ourselves, and to imitate the comprehensive knowledge and merciful impartiality of our heavenly Father, then to pronounce on the opinions or practice of others."

In the preceding chapter having referred to public historical events with which every one is acquainted, we return once more to domestic occurrences relative to Charles Webster and his friends. The worthy and venerable Bishop Rait, who exhibited much of the primitive simplicity and dignity in his life and deportment, died. He was a widower, and his eldest daughter, Miss Peggy Rait, who survived him, was a lady of superior excellence and high attainments, both in the Christian life and in human learning and accomplishments. His youngest daughter, who

died in early life, was much admired for her personal attractions, and her beauty is celebrated in the ballads of her native land, where she is described as

“ The minister’s daughter o’ bonny Dundee.”

Bishop Strachan succeeded the good Bishop Rait in the diocese of Brechin. He was a man that had much kindness of heart, and great urbanity of manners. A strong intimacy and frequent interchange of the courtesies of life took place in those times between pastor and people. The contumely cast upon the Church in Scotland made those of the Episcopal Communion cling the more closely together. Congeniality of sentiment in matters of the highest importance endeared them all to each other. Bishop Strachan, according to the Scripture rule, used hospitality without grudging,—approvable hospitality, no luxurious feasting or conviviality; but he kept a plentiful table for the entertainment of friends and strangers, and especially young candidates for the holy ministry; and all who shared his hospitality had a cordial and hearty welcome

to the good cheer provided for them, while he himself observed the greatest moderation and plainness in his diet. Though his dinner-table was furnished with every dainty which the season produced or the cook's art could devise, he partook but of one simple dish ; and at his evening repast, he observed the same rule. Though his supper-board was set out with equal abundance and variety for the entertainment of others, his own invariable meal was then a small portion of oat-meal porridge and milk, served up to him in two old-fashioned China bowls ; and over this simple repast he entertained his happy guests with a flow of agreeable conversation, seasoned with instruction and adorned with pleasing illustrations. Heartfelt happiness pervaded the circle, where an interchange of high and elevating sentiments flowed forth and enlivened it ; and where seriousness without moroseness, and cheerfulness without levity, were observed. He was an unmarried man, and his family circle consisted of a sister, and his two nieces, viz., Miss Anne and Miss Jean Affleck, generally spelt Auchinleck. His housekeeping was

managed by a faithful old domestic, Nelly Vollum, who ruled the under-servants, and kept the keys. Trustworthy servants were to be had, we are told, in those days, and Nelly Vollum was one of those who was devoted to the interests of the family she served.

Her skill in the pastry-cook's art was unsurpassed. She fabricated the sweetmeats, confections, or other dainties, of which there was always an abundant supply in the Bishop's house for the more especial entertainment of juvenile visitors, of whom he had not a few; and among the most frequent of those youthful guests were his own cousins—the youthful members of Mr Webster's family. He delighted in the company of little children, and he instructed and amused them, and never was happier than when he saw the innocent creatures smiling around him with unfeigned delight; and he would pleasantly relax from his graver discourse to older guests, and direct their sports, and set them to accomplish a crowning feat in their pastime, that of threading a needle upon a bottle. This achievement was always a point of competition among the

young group—the little Websters and their little cousins the Lyells, who were often of the party, and the worthy Bishop's applause to the best performer was what all were eager to obtain, and all they sought.

Bishop Strachan was a man of fine appearance, tall and handsome, with a good complexion—the hue of health and temperance in all things; and the affability and courtesy of his manners, and the cheerfulness of his disposition, imparted a most agreeable expression to his countenance. He always wore the insignia of his office, his cassock, &c.

He was strictly a Churchman in his principles, but was very far removed from bigotry or illiberality. Indeed, his whole temperament was contrary to these, and he acted and felt as is described in the stanza which it would be well if we could all adopt,—

“ Whatever system I esteem,
Or sect or party do approve,
My whole religion is a dream,
If void of charity or love.”

Bishop Strachan, by right, succeeded to a

baronetage belonging to the family, but he declined assuming the title, so that in his lifetime it remained in abeyance.

Charles Webster had the good fortune, by the providence of God, to have his lot cast among that class of society where all the high and ennobling social virtues were inculcated and set forth to him by many living examples. At home his pious parents fixed the first early impressions of all that is honourable and good upon his youthful mind. The associates whose acquaintance he cultivated strengthened the same, and he left his native land and prosecuted his travels abroad with those elevated sentiments of rectitude, based upon the solid foundation of a sound religious education, which are the best safeguards and the surest step to eminence as well as happiness.

At Paris he pursued his medical studies, where his grandfather's friend, Dr Pitcairne, also acquired much of that knowledge by which he attained to such great celebrity. Dr Webster mingled with the best circles there, and was held in high estimation for his

literary attainments and varied accomplishments. His visits to the Continent at several different times would have furnished much interesting matter had memorials of them been preserved.

But admired as he was wherever he went, it never estranged his thoughts from home ; his heart and his affections were there. John the eighth Lord Rollo, a very kind-hearted and excellent nobleman, used with much pleasure and animation to relate a small incident in his own experience. His Lordship was travelling in Italy. One afternoon he halted at a remote country inn to take up his abode for the night. The host informed him that his house was full, and that he could not accommodate another guest. Lord Rollo was dismayed at the intelligence, but as there was no alternative, he was preparing to drive on another stage of his journey before the night set in ; when an Englishman who had overheard the colloquy, politely sent a message and said, that if it were agreeable to this new guest that had arrived to accept of a share of his apartments, he should be most welcome. Lord Rollo

most joyfully heard the invitation, and readily availed himself of the acceptable offer of this stranger. The fascinating manners of his new acquaintance and accomplished countryman charmed him ; and he said he never spent so delightful an evening in the company of any one as in *his*.

It was a night he never could forget. The genial kindness of his entertainer, and the fascinations of his conversation, made an indelible impression upon him. The stranger was Dr Charles Webster.

CHAPTER XIV.

DR WEBSTER'S mother was, as already stated, a woman of excellent talents. She had watched with much maternal solicitude the welfare of her children and their progress in life. The elder members of the family were most of them advantageously settled; and now her parental eye was directed with more especial interest to her youngest born.

But the kindness of her beneficent nature was not confined and partial, nor wholly engrossed with her own family. She had a heart that encircled in its warm affections a wide range of her fellow Christians. Active benevolence and kindness governed her arrangements, and none were overlooked or forgotten. Her husband's heart confided in her,

and he looked upon all her actions with an approving eye. It is not unusual to praise the *old* times to the disparagement of the *new*. But in whatever respect, the comparison is unfair, and ought, if made, to be given in favour of modern advancement and refinement ; yet there is not a doubt that in point of real heartfelt kindness, sociability, and reciprocal hospitality, the bygone times carry off the palm.

Mrs Thomas Webster was now advancing in the vale of years ; but the surveillance of her domestic arrangements was still performed by her. It was a picture to see the excellent lady, with her acute and intelligent countenance, watching and directing the operations of her household. Habited in a mantle of fine scarlet cloth, fastened with a gold button, and her black lace hood, she would descend to the larder, which was one of the great stone kitchens fitted up as a larder and girdel-house, and there seated, and summoning her servants, she pointed with a cane, and issued her orders with an authority and precision that

secured accuracy and obedience. She touched nothing herself, but told how all should be done, and everything was done to perfection under her direction—curing and preserving meats, &c., for which she was famed; and as every festive season came round, substantial presents were sent to all her family and friends at a distance. Nor were the poor forgotten; her stores were opened for them also, and she was never more happily employed than when she was seeing their portions weighed out to them. And these portions were dealt with a liberal hand. If she had partiality in her beneficence, the members of the Church and the friends of the exiled Prince had the largest share, and every year as the birth-day of Prince Charles returned, the whole household were called up to receive some excellent refectious, and to drink the health of his Royal Highness in the best wine.

When Charles Webster was abroad and this ceremony happened to be repeated with its usual formality, one of the servants on returning to the kitchen, exclaimed with de-

lighted astonishment to her fellows, "No wonder that the lady is a proud lady. No wonder indeed. Did ever I know till this night that her son was a Prince!"

The obvious mistake was a matter of some amusement.

Mr Thomas Webster had bought another house which had belonged to Lord Dundee's brother. This was for a jointure house to his widow, and at his death she removed to it. Dr Charles Webster was appointed minister of St Paul's Chapel, Carrubber's Close, Edinburgh, a place of worship which has seen many vicissitudes. It had been shut during the persecutions, and re-opened several times, and is the oldest Protestant Episcopal Church in Edinburgh. When restored under Queen Anne's Act of Toleration, that Sovereign presented an organ to it. This Royal gift went by the name of Queen Anne's organ, and was used till some years ago when a new one was purchased for the chapel, and the vestry, probably ignorant of the history of the old organ, sold it, and it has passed into the hands of a furniture-dealer. Things of less note, and connected

with far less pleasing associations, have been preserved by antiquarians as curiosities.

St Paul's Chapel had, in old times, been highly favoured with the ministry of eminent and pious ministers ; and Dr Webster, when appointed to that pastoral charge, was in point of abilities, learning, and, above all, genuine piety, not behind any of them ; or in truth, was second to none, of whatever denomination, in the metropolis of his native land.

Having taken his degrees in medicine as well as in divinity, he commenced practising as a physician and public lecturer in the College.

Edinburgh was then at the zenith of its medical fame, and Dr Webster, though but a young man, possessed an experimental knowledge and profoundness of skill that was not surpassed by his seniors of high note, who at that period adorned the profession, and who regarded his brilliant attainments in science with just admiration.

Being as yet a bachelor, it was arranged after his settlement in Edinburgh that his mother should remove thither and reside with him. But He in whose hands are the destinies

of all, otherwise directed the event. On the night before her proposed removal to Edinburgh, she had her son George and his family invited to be with her. It was a Sabbath evening, and they spent its sacred hours together in sweet harmony and Christian fellowship. A stronger bond than that of kindred subsisted among them. The bonds of the gospel united them in happy concord, and the consanguinity of the blood of Christ.

They talked of her departure on the morrow with mingled feelings of sorrow and also of gratulation.

She was going to be with her dear son Charles, and he was appointed to a sphere of usefulness and responsibility.

It was a sweet evening of spring or early summer. She sat in an arbour in her garden amid the budding profusion of the charming season, with the radiant sky above, the bloom of flowers, the verdant shade, and the melody of birds, surrounding the affectionate family group.

Her grandchildren looked up to her with reverence and love. She spake to them the

words of heavenly wisdom derived from the oracles of truth. She addressed them all with a parent's love that yearned for their best interests.

They partook of a simple repast in the open air before they parted, and she gave them her blessing.

A messenger came at midnight to the house of her son George. As soon as he heard him knock he said, with foreboding voice, "It is from my mother; she is ill." The conjecture was too correct. She had been seized with a pain in the back of her neck, probably the effects of cold, from sitting out in the garden in the night air. She suffered severely, but not long.

The next morning she took her departure, indeed, on a far journey, but a happy one—to that

"Land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign."

She entered the Jordan, and crossed it without a fear.

The first question of her grandchildren to their parents, on their return home, was, "How is our grandmamma?"

Mrs George Webster said calmly to them,
“My dears, she is well and happy.”

The expression remained long in their recollection, indeed it never lost its impression,—that their grandmother was well and happy, and yet they saw her no more.

CHAPTER XV.

DR CHARLES WEBSTER'S parents being dead, the family was worthily represented by his elder brother George, one of whose sons afterwards became his uncle's colleague in the ministry.

Every thing relative to Mr George Webster's character and conduct is of that pleasing description, and so worthy of imitation, that one dwells with satisfaction on every little incident in his life that has been preserved.

His benevolence has already been noticed, and it was of that unostentatious kind that many of his acts of charity and brotherly kindness might be truly said to be known only to his Father who seeth in secret, and which shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. From his own table, portions were sent to the sick, the infirm, the

reduced in circumstances, the poor. These partook of the good cheer which was provided for his own family. If he did not, "when he made a feast," literally perform the Divine command of calling "the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind," to sit at his table, he fulfilled it in the spiritual and true sense ; he sent to them a share of what was bountifully given to him by his Heavenly Father. And not unfrequently his children were delegated on those errands of mercy, bearing in their hands to those who could not afford it out of their own means, the luxuries of a comfortable meal from their dinner-table before they had partaken of it themselves.

With his alms he was equally liberal, and he gave as God had prospered him. Charitable societies did not, in those days exist as they do now, and in some measure dry up the channels of private benevolence. He visited the respectable poor. He administered his bounties as he saw they had need. He would pay the rent of one—he would send the winter store of provisions to another—he would educate the children of a third—he would

assist parents to set out their sons in life—he would give his counsel and admonition to those who were about to encounter the snares of the world—and he would direct the pursuits of those who were unsettled in their choice. Some, from very small beginnings, whom he thus befriended, attained to eminence.

His own handwriting was good, and he gave to the famous caligrapher, Butterworth, in some of his beneficent visits, his first copy in penmanship, and encouraged his practice of the invaluable art.

He had a heart of universal kindness, and his sympathies flowed for every one in difficulty. A gentleman in his neighbourhood, a Captain T——, who from unpropitious events, was much embarrassed, and yet of too proud a spirit to solicit or accept of relief for himself and family, he tried various ways of assisting, without wounding his feelings, or alarming his pride. One of those methods which he adopted, when he had reason to fear that he was much in want of assistance was, to send one of his daughters, desiring her to

ask for Mrs T——, the lady of the house, and to put five pounds into her hands, and say that that was something her father owed Captain T——.

The child did as she was directed, and probably at the time understood the transaction in the literal sense, instead of a debt of Christian charity, as it really was, to a distressed neighbour ; for he who sent her with it indeed owed no man anything but love.

Another pleasing circumstance is related. A widow lady of very limited income, in order to assist in the support and education of her children, resorted to the common expedient of keeping a lodger. A gentleman came to offer himself as an inmate, whom she received into her house. The seriousness of his aspect, the quietness and modesty with which he deputed himself, and his unoffending manners, and forbearance to give trouble or exact much service, interested her and inspired her with respect, although she soon discovered that he was very, very poor. He was a Roman Catholic priest. Punctual in the payments which he owed herself for his lodgings,

&c., he seemed to have scarcely anything for his own support. He concealed his privations in the seclusion of his own parlour, or by a walk into the country. His landlady believed he was starving. Her heart grieved for him, and the more so as she could not aid him herself, nor wound his feelings by shewing that she saw his straitened circumstances, which he evidently strove to conceal.

But she knew a family from whose board many of the needy were fed. She made known the state of her half-famished lodger to Mr George Webster.

The privations of the poor Romish priest touched his sympathies, and notwithstanding the aversion with which the Protestant is taught to regard Popish errors, he, with that fine catholicity of spirit that regards with fraternal love every member of the human race, whatever his religious opinions may be, shewed him kindness. He introduced himself to him. He invited him as a frequent, or rather daily guest to his table; and with that genuine sense of gospel love, as taught by the apostle, who would not for meats offend

a brother,—the family dinner on Fridays was oat porridge and small beer, of which repast the good Roman Catholic partook with cheerful gratitude and sociality. Oh, if men were more accommodating and conciliating, without compromising right principles, how would the tide of Christianity flow out as a refreshing stream! The silent influence of a Christ-like example would effect more than a thousand volumes of controversy.

Soon after this period, Wesley visited Scotland; not with any view to create schismatical divisions, which he disapproved and condemned, but to stir up a greater zeal in the diffusion of evangelical truths, and to promote a more devotional spirit and performance of Christian duties.

The tone of religious society in that country he found low, and their forms of worship appeared strange and uncongenial to his mind. "I went," says he, in his diary, "to the Church of England service in the morning, and to the Kirk in the afternoon. But, truly, no man having drank the old wine straightway desireth the new." But it was not to interfere

or innovate that was the object of his mission, but to make men, by the divine blessing, more in earnest about the things which belong to their everlasting salvation. When he visited Dundee, the state of the religious world he thought better there than in other parts of Scotland.

The aspect of religion in those days the profane satires of Robert Burns describe with sufficient truth. The irreligious enlisted these as arguments on their own side, and directed them as dangerous weapons against religion itself; whereas they are merely accurate representations of a particular section of the community, and are descriptive only of the natural results of continued political ferments, ignorance, and enthusiasm.

The Church of Rome, among its manifold delinquencies and corruptions, first introduced that of seldom communion; and then the sacrament, occurring at rare intervals, was made a grand pageant to attract crowds from all quarters. This practice was retained, or too much followed in Scotland, where the infrequency of the sacramental occasion, and

having it generally but in one place only at a time, caused multitudes to flock to it from distances of twenty or thirty miles as mere spectators, leaving the other churches deserted during the celebration of the divine ordinance. Professedly religious writers or moralists who impugned such a state of matters were hated or put down, and decried as infidels. Popular clamour—which is a fearful antagonist, and one which is easily roused, but difficult to calm down into anything like reason—clung with pertinacity to the usages that had been adopted after the changes in religion and church government had taken place.

The General Assembly laboured in its deliberations to bring about a better state of things, and did at last effect a much-desired improvement in many points; but not without much opposition and dissatisfaction, which is not to be wondered at when a tenet was held by many, viz., that the chief foundation of all ecclesiastical functions is popular election.

Wesley found in Mr George Webster—for whom he entertained a warm affection and

friendship—a man of congenial mind and sentiment. He was a decided and steady member of the Episcopal Church, but heartily acquiesced in Mr Wesley's plan of reviving the drooping spirit of religion among all denominations of Christians.

Mr Wesley had no wish to draw away people from the various churches to which they belonged. On the contrary, he exhorted them to remain firm adherents of the Established Churches of their native lands, but to become better and more exemplary members of them. On week-days he had worship at five o'clock in the morning, so that artisans or servants might be at liberty to go to their various occupations at six. On Sundays he preached at such times as did not interfere with the canonical hours of divine service, that it might not interrupt the people's regular attendance at the Established or other places of worship.

Mr and Mrs George Webster attended his meetings with much edification. Their hearts were in unison with his own in their sympathies and devout affections. The same Divine

Spirit struck upon them, and attuned them as instruments of divine harmony. Wesley's ministrations were signally blessed to many careless ones, who felt not till then the danger of lukewarmness or indifference in religion; and that there must be a sincere, an earnest, and an abiding interest in the Redeemer's perfect work, otherwise there is the fearful risk of being only almost saved. His great object was to revive the extinguished spirit of the church. If any who were hostile to his views were introduced into his presence, their hostility was changed into acquiescence and admiration. His energetic voice, his bright and beaming eye, his heavenly expression of countenance, were singularly striking.

His earnest tones when he gave out the hymn,—

“ Give to the winds thy fears,
Hope, and be undismay'd,”—

thrilled through every heart that could respond to the encouraging strains. Or when, on his return from America, in allusion to his mission there, he repeated the lines,—

“ With my pastoral crook
I went over the brook,
And, behold, I am spread into bands !”

it produced an impression never to be effaced from the minds of those who heard him.

Mr and Mrs George Webster were habitually very early risers, and therefore it was scarcely an effort for them to attend his morning meetings. They usually returned home before the children were awake. Their father had always some pleasing illustration or metaphor to excite the interest of the young people when he went into the nursery. “ What beautiful carpets are laid out upon the fields,” he would say ; “ have you not been up to see them ?” Some agreeable salutation of this kind usually roused the children from their slumbers. They all started up with eager curiosity to see the sight—the meadows covered with daisies and buttercups.

One morning very early in spring, while the mornings were yet dark, Mr George Webster’s son, John,—then a child about six years old, who had but recently recovered from a fever,—was left with his brother asleep. His father

and mother were at Mr Wesley's meeting. Mr Wesley had not proceeded far with his devout address when a pale-faced, sickly-looking child walked into the midst of the chapel, and looked anxiously around for some known face. His parents with surprise saw the little boy whom they had left asleep in the nursery. Mr George Webster rose from his seat, and took him beside him. He lifted up his pale face, and fixed his eyes upon Wesley with intense earnestness. When the service was ended, Wesley came down from the pulpit, stroked the child's head, and blessed him, and said, "My dear little fellow, I hope good things will come of *you*." This child devoted himself to the ministry, and was Dr Webster's colleague. He was a child of grave deportment. He usually sat in the church on the steps of the altar, with his head resting on a little cane; his father's pew was close by. The seriousness of the youthful worshipper was natural to him.

Mr Dempster of Donichen used to say, "If little Webster is set before me to-day, *his* gravity will certainly upset *mine*."

A tradesman called one day to see Mrs Webster on business. He was shewn into a parlour where her son John was seated, ruminating with his usual seriousness. The stranger having remained some time, wondering at his sedate remarks, at length seemed anxious to depart, probably grudging his time; "You had better wait," said the little boy, "till my mother comes in." "Your mother!" said the gentleman, affecting to be much surprised, "could I suppose that such an old, old man as you had a mother?"

These details must, no doubt, appear trivial and uninteresting to the general reader, but the dispositions and pursuits of the child very frequently unfold the future habits of the man, and in this particular instance they did so. The early piety and staid deportment of the little boy were abiding principles that in after life adorned the character of the Rev. John Webster.

The simple facts which occurred in one private family might be a sample of the excitement and curiosity that prevailed about Wesley. Mr Webster's cook,—Jenny Hill, a

stern and staid Calvinist, who would scorn to go after his strange doctrines,—had a strong desire to hear this extraordinary teacher, but resolved to gratify that wish without its being known. She retired early to rest for that purpose; and on awaking from her slumbers, slipped out secretly and softly in the dark, unnoticed by any one. There was a streak of moonlight to guide her on her walk to the town, and when she got into the midst of the city she looked about, expecting to see the people going on the same errand as herself, but not a creature was to be seen in the streets. Surely she was not too late; it could not be past five o'clock. She walked on, not knowing whither she went, till she came to the Cross of Dundee. She sat down upon its steps, and waited patiently till Wesley's followers should appear. After waiting for a time, the town clock struck twelve. She counted the midnight hour, and it brought her back to a sense of her duty. She lingered no longer, but hastened home, and stole quietly into her dormitory without disturbing her sleeping comrades; but she repented her

clandestine conduct, and determined never to transgress again on the rules of domestic duty. She asked and readily obtained the sanction of her indulgent mistress to go to hear the remarkable stranger that had come among them.

Mr Wesley's reception in Scotland was not of that kind generally which might have been expected. He says himself, in his journal, "I am not a preacher for the people of Edinburgh." His strain of preaching, as he never left the practical part of Christianity out of view, was not so acceptable where the abstruse doctrines of election, predestination, &c., were the more favourite topics of the pulpit. He had been accused in his own country, as well as there, of preaching the works of the law instead of the gospel, but he persevered in declaring the whole counsel of God. He never truckled to the tastes of the audience, nor said smooth things to flatter their prejudices. He exhorted those who attended him to adhere to the Established Church of their native land. The principles of dissent naturally involve heresies and false doctrine.

The occasion of his violating the rules of his own church was first occasioned by a circumstance which happened in Dundee. Among his hearers, when in that town, were a poor artisan and his wife belonging to the Church of Scotland. They were but recently married ; and, on the birth of a son, the kirk-session, who were much displeased at their attendance on Mr Wesley's meetings, charged the poor couple with immorality of conduct, and denied baptism to the infant unless the parents confessed the charge and underwent the usual forms of church censure. A Mrs Hare, a sick-nurse from Edinburgh, had been brought over by the church court to attend the woman, and give her evidence in the case. Mrs Hare's evidence coincided with the opinion of the kirk-session. The distress of the poor mother thus falsely accused was so great, that her life was endangered. She was in a great strait ; but, dreading to lose the benefit of the divine ordinance of baptism for her son, she said that she was willing to undergo any public rebuke.

The husband was in equal distress, lest his

wife should fall a sacrifice to this inquisitorial indictment. He applied to the Methodist preachers, but none of them had a title to dispense church ordinances.

These and other friends met to deliberate upon the case, and a letter was written to Mr Wesley, stating the circumstances, and entreating him to send a person qualified to administer the rites of the church. Mr Wesley, with much reluctance, foreseeing that it would lead to divisions, sent two ordained ministers from England to adjust matters. The infant was baptised by one of them, and this child afterwards became a useful and exemplary Wesleyan preacher.

Mr Wesley, who was strictly a Churchman in principle, in his correspondence with Mr George Webster adverts in one of his letters to this measure that he had been reluctantly persuaded by his preachers to adopt; and he adds,—“It is altogether against my mind, and half against my conscience.” So decidedly did he express himself as opposed to anything that would tend to dissent from the Establishment, which he justly considered as

the custodier of the right standards of the Christian faith, and the best bulwark of the country against infidelity.

The following extract from the report of the proceedings of the Methodists (recently published), corroborates these statements:—

“Mr Wesley evidently did not design to establish the Methodist Connexion as an independent church, but simply as an association for the promotion of piety among the members of churches then existing. The infant societies thus raised by his fostering care naturally regarded him as their father in Christ, and placed themselves under his paternal oversight. So long as he lived he ruled them all, preachers as well as people, with their own consent. A power thus derived could not in the nature of things be transferred to any other man, or to any body of men. Well aware of this, he observes,— ‘To me the people in general will submit; but they will not thus submit to any other.’

* * * * *

“Methodism did not assume the form of a *distinct* church until after the death of Mr

Wesley. It was not till the year 1797 that its constitution as a church was finally settled, and that a covenant and code of laws for its permanent government was ratified by final agreement between the Conference of Preachers on the one part, and a body of the people's chosen representatives on the other part.

* * * * *

“All the Methodist Preachers were at first styled Lay Preachers. Mr Wesley was with difficulty persuaded to allow laymen to preach at all. He designated such coadjutors as Lay Assistants and Helpers, and expressly forbade them to administer the sacraments, or to allow themselves to be called ministers. It was not until the year 1820 that they ventured openly to lay aside the simple description of “Preacher of the Gospel,” and to assume the title of ‘Reverend.’”

As Mr Wesley well foresaw that any infringement of the rules of the church would inevitably lead to divisions which he condemned, it so happened that shortly after his death the preachers assembled in Conference, and assumed to themselves a legislative autho-

rity, and extended the powers of their district meetings beyond their just boundary. To these encroachments the people would not submit; and among them and the preachers had arisen violent and unseemly dissensions concerning the administration of the holy ordinances of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, which some wished to receive at the hands of the travelling preachers, and others would not accept but from those of regularly ordained clergymen. "The agitation," says their own report, "became so violent, that Methodism appeared to be on the verge of dissolution."

CHAPTER XVI.

MR WESLEY'S itinerant preachers generally set out at night on their pedestrian journeys, and travelled by the light of the moon to the town or village at which they designed to preach early in the morning. Many of them were self-denied, excellent men; and it is to be hoped that their pious labours produced good fruits in many places. On one of Mr Wesley's subsequent visits to Scotland, when he arrived at Dundee his first inquiry was for his friend, Mr George Webster. He was much disappointed when he found he was from home. He was in Edinburgh. Wesley proceeded thither; and, landing at Leith, was coming up Leith Walk, in company with some of his preachers, when, to his great joy, he met Mr George Webster on his way down to that port. Wesley hastened to him, clasped

him in his arms, and kissed him. "My dear, dear friend," exclaimed he, "how I have missed *you*!"

The joy that beamed in Wesley's bright eye at this unexpected meeting is indescribable. The joy was reciprocal. Two kinder or purer hearts were never united together more closely in the bonds of Christian friendship. It was a privilege indeed to possess the confidence and esteem of such a man as Wesley, and George Webster felt it to be so; and every time they met he had fresh reason to venerate and love a man whose very aspect diffused happiness.

George Webster was on a visit to his brother Charles, who was exercising the functions of his sacred calling, and employing all his varied gifts and acquirements to the utmost of his power in the service of his divine Master, and for the good of his fellow-men. In his pastoral labours he was eminently successful. His church was soon filled, not with a fluctuating, curiosity-stricken audience, but with stated, regular members, and steady adherents of the church. Most of the old Epis-

copal families of note in the city sat under his ministry, and the passages, gallery stairs, and even the outer steps were crowded. The estimation in which the various localities of the town of Edinburgh were held at that time was different to what it is now, in the middle of a succeeding century. Some of the southern squares and streets were then almost exclusively occupied by the nobility and gentry; and Dr Webster built and founded St Peter's Chapel, as being in a convenient position for his hearers in that neighbourhood. This obviated the inconvenient crowding at St Paul's; and his nephew, John, being appointed his colleague, they officiated alternately in both the churches every Lord's-day to a full attendance of devoted and intelligent hearers, who valued the privileges of their restored worship in proportion to the not yet forgotten deprivations which they had once endured. St Peter's Chapel continued to be the private property of Dr Webster's family till some years ago, when his representatives sold it to some of the vestry or managers of the chapel.

At the opening of St Peter's, Dr Webster preached an appropriate sermon "On Public Worship and Instruction," from these words: "Ye shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord" (Leviticus xxvi. 2). When the discourse was printed he appended various notes to it; from which notes the following extracts are quoted:—

"The first appropriated places of worship were altars made of rough stone or earth, usually on high places, on which the worshippers offered sacrifices, before which they called on the name of the Lord, and to which they added the shelter and solemn shade of trees and groves. Hence trees, groves, and mountains became generally sacred; and hence the grove or avenue shape of what are called the later Gothic cathedrals. Jacob set up a pillar, on the top of which he poured oil and a drink-offering; from which Bethel, as he called it, are derived the ancient Bætyli, and practice of erecting pillars of stone or wood,—before the use of statues,—and of anointing them with oil. Pillars and images became synonymous, from images being carved or placed

on their top. Some—as Laban's—were portable, and kept in cases called tabernacles, or, if large, temples. Aaron's golden calf seems to have been placed on a pillar, with an altar before it. Altars and images were enclosed with a rail, such as God ordered round Sinai on delivering the law. In process of time a higher wall was built on the outside of the rail, having seats within, under a portico, with a subdiale or gallery above, as in the house of Dagon at Gaza, which Samson overthrew, and at Ashdod, in which was the ark of God.

“Hesiod makes no mention of temples. Homer describes some magnificent ones, but whether roofed or open does not appear. Virgil describes Priam's chapel thus:—

‘Ædibus in mediis, nudaque sub ætheris axe,
Ingens ara fuit; juxtaque veterrima laurus
Incumbens aræ, atque umbra complexa Penatis.’

The ancient notion was, that the gods were not to be confined: “Quibus omnia deberent esse patentia ac libera, quorum hic mundus omnis templum esset ac domus.” So the Persians and other nations had either no temples, or they were open above, that they

might see the heavenly bodies, the objects of their worship. When they began to be roofed, a round opening was left in the middle, as in the Pantheon and the Temple of Terminus at Rome, of which Ovid says,—

‘Nunc quoque se supra ne quod nisi sidera cernat,
Exiguum templi tecta foramen habent.’

At length temples became quite roofed, and the porticoes which used to be within were built without. The Temple of Jerusalem was perhaps the first that was entirely roofed. Such was its extent and magnificence, that it occupied 153,000 workmen for several years; and it may have contributed to the improved architecture of Greece and Rome.

“The first places of Christian worship were sepulchres, caves, and private houses. Constantine founded several magnificent churches, as that of St Saviour’s at Rome, and that of St Sophia at Constantinople, which Justinian, at its consecration, compared to that of Solomon’s.

“In this island, the inhabitants,—who before the Roman invasion lived in thickets, dens, and caves,—became, till the middle of

the fourth century, more and more civilised. Architecture and the arts connected with it flourished ; and every Roman colony and free city (of which there was a great number) was a little Rome. But the devastations of the Scots, Picts, and Saxons, that ensued, destroyed every vestige of art and civilisation, and lodged them again in the miserable habitations of their savage ancestors. There was hardly a stone church in the island till about the beginning of the eighth century, when Wilfrid and Biscop, two English bishops, introduced from Italy the art of building with stone, and the use of glass ; but it was not till the beginning of the twelfth century, that an improved fabric of churches became general in Britain. For near a century after, the ordinary houses, even in London and other capitals of Europe, were only of wood, and thatched ; and it was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that, with learning of all kinds, the chaste architecture of Greece and Rome revived.

* * * * *

“ Some consider Episcopacy as a system of

subordination, originating, like civil institutions, from the circumstances of the times, as from the form of the municipal and provincial magistracy of the Roman empire ; as not inconsistent with any form of civil government, having existed under all, and for the three first centuries independently of any ; yet as best suited to monarchy, as an encouragement to learning and piety, as giving respect to the clergy as a body, as contributing to national order and decorum, and in no respect inconsistent with Scripture. Others, considering that no society can subsist without government ; that the principle of subordination is as natural and necessary a branch of our constitution as the social principle itself, and therefore of divine original ; that, with regard to civil government, though its form is indefinite, yet when established it cannot be resisted without a resistless necessity,—maintain that, as revelation is a positive institution, religious government must have a definite form, determinate ordinances, and be administered only by persons of a specific designation ; that the priesthood, ever representative of our great

High Priest, was, during the patriarchal economy, in the first-born; that under the law, Aaron and his sons were, by the express command of God to Moses, consecrated, and the Levites set apart for the ministrations of the temple, the penalty of invading their office being death; that as the law continued in force even after our Saviour's resurrection, precepts on the government of his church might be last given only to the apostles, and perhaps with injunctions of secrecy, that his religion, which was to be propagated without violence, might succeed to the Jewish with as little offence and variation as the typical nature of the one and the corresponding nature of the other would admit; that, as St Jerome and other fathers observe, 'What Aaron and his sons and the Levites were in the temple, such are bishops, presbyters, and deacons in the Christian church;'—these orders having been settled and in train before the New Testament was published, did not require to be minutely described, but rest on evidence as strong as that for the observance of the Christian Sabbath; that even our Sa-

viour glorified not himself till solemnly authorised by the descent of the Holy Spirit, and by a voice from heaven ; that only to the apostles and the seventy, of all his disciples, he gave authority to minister, which to the latter was only temporary and personal, but to the former was at his ascension solemnly renewed, extending to the whole world and to the end of time, empowering them alone to send others as his Father had sent him ; that, notwithstanding the promiscuous use of the sacerdotal titles in the New Testament, as Aaron and his subordinate sons are indiscriminately styled priests in the Old, the names became distinct, as the offices always were ; that according to the fathers, the apostles were succeeded in the powers of confirmation, ordination, and jurisdiction, by the bishops, who, perhaps out of humility, changed the title, and who derived their mission from the twelve, from Timothy, Titus, Sylvanus, Epaphroditus, called apostles or angels of the churches ; that as their superiority is universally acknowledged to have been fully established, at the latest, about thirty-five years

after the death of St John, A.D. 135; and as there was no Christian sovereign till Constantine, A.D. 313, nor general council before that of Nice, A.D. 325, when could the superiority have been introduced? How could such a change have taken place so suddenly and so universally, yet so quietly and secretly, that no vestige of it can be traced? That no other form of church government was known for upwards of fourteen centuries, when Calvin declared for the equality, Luther and his followers in general retaining the orders; that regular lists of the names of the successive bishops have been preserved in some churches from the time they were founded by the apostles; that the chief, if not the only authority quoted as implying an original equality of the three orders, are some passages from St Jerome, which, taken in connection, mean the powers of bishop and presbyter,—equal only in absolution and consecration, not in ordination, confirmation, and jurisdiction; and which, as otherwise inconsistent with the passage mentioned above, and others of the

same father, would only tend to invalidate his authority.

“Episcopacy in Scotland has had different fates. The violent ferment of the Reformation did not properly subside there for fifty years, when, in 1610, Episcopacy was derived from England, and established by law. In 1636, a Scottish liturgy was authorised by King Charles I., but violently opposed; and after the civil and religious tumults which immediately followed, and overturned both church and state, the failure in the episcopal line was supplied by the surviving bishops in England, when, in 1661, Episcopacy without any liturgy was again established. Our church did not comply with the Revolution 1688, but was tolerated in 1712, and has continued an undisputed Episcopal succession, has subsisted without the countenance of the State, or any connection with the Church of England, and retains the government, the principles, and, since 1707, the liturgy, of that her mother church. In the communion service, indeed, her clergy are at liberty to use it, or one similar to that introduced into Scotland by King

Charles I., and to that of the first liturgy of Edward VI., which is approved by Parliament as a godly order, even in the act that, with a prudent view to unity, authorised the second. The chief difference is that of simply blessing the elements, in addition to the words of institution. The mixture is not mentioned, and the commemoration of the faithful is not more explicit than in the present English service, by which the most scrupulous among us occasionally communicate and administer ; nor do they differ more from their brethren in their ideas of the Eucharist than Bishops Warburton and Hoadley, and other eminent divines of the Church of England, differ from one another. The bishops had no particular districts from 1720 till 1731 ; and, ever since, the clergy, in electing their bishop, require only the mandate and sanction of the bishops. At no period, indeed, since the revolution, were political principles made a term of communion, a subject of examination for orders or of instruction, so far as I know, more than in general that of submission to regular government. Both clergy and laity of the

Church of England were received at our altars ; men attached to government were admitted into orders, and men in orders among us eminent for abilities and worth had no objection to comply with government but that of deviating from their brethren in general in the prayers for the State.

“ In 1719, 1746, and 1748, penal laws were enacted against the clergy and members of our church for noncompliance. As these laws affected people even of the lowest political importance, many were disposed to overlook the necessity of Episcopal government, and to solicit clergymen of English or Irish ordination to settle in Scotland, where, were it only from our increasing intercourse with England, Episcopal worship must have a place ; and there is no doubt that these clergymen have kept an attachment to that worship alive among many in whom it had every chance to have been long ago extinguished.

“ On the death of the last hope of the Royal family of Stuart, our church felt herself at liberty to acknowledge, in a public declaration and in her prayers, the present govern-

ment; and although the penal laws, which are only against nonconformists to the State, seem, on our compliance, virtually to have ceased, yet to satisfy people's minds, they require a formal repeal, the object of which would be merely to put us on a footing with other sects,—can give to our ecclesiastical superiors no political character, nor even any spiritual connection, but with those who choose to acknowledge them, and would tend to produce a desirable and mutually advantageous union of the two kinds of Episcopacy north of the Tweed.”

The interior of St Peter's has undergone some alterations, but its ornaments are thus described by Dr Webster in another note to his sermons:—

“The altar-piece, painted by Mr Allan, is the Tribute-money and Virtues.

“In the centre, our Saviour, the principal figure, with a suitable expression of dignified serenity, is standing with his arm raised and pointing upwards, as if concluding the answer, ‘And to God the things that are God's.’ An old Pharisee appears to feel the full force of

the words and look, is stooping, drawing in the piece of money, and raising one foot as if inclining to withdraw. A hardened Herodian seems to lose the sense of his own mortification in the enjoyment of the Pharisee's confusion ; while another behind is retiring with marks of disappointment and anger. In the left extremity, a youth, in a pensive posture, with the features of innocence, seems pondering on the contrast between our Saviour and the group. In the background, an aged Rabbi, with the law-roll in his hand, is sitting, impatient for the result. In the distance, a man is pointing out our Saviour to another, with looks of pious admiration.

“Round the picture, which is nine feet by six, are the virtues, Purity, Faith, Hope, and Charity.”

CHAPTER XVII.

ALLUSION is made in the notes quoted in the foregoing chapter to the death of Prince Charles, "the last hope of the Stuarts," to whom Dr Webster and his family were devotedly attached. His misfortunes, and the ultimate failure of his enterprise, after he had magnanimously thrown himself, singly and alone, upon the honour and loyalty of the nation, so far from quenching their attachment to him, endeared him the more. Every thing connected with him was held in veneration, and every memorial of him preserved as heirlooms. A lady, we are told, humbly expressed a wish to have a lock of his hair. The graceful Prince knelt down, laid his head upon her lap, and bade her take as much as she would. The fascination of his manners diffused a charm

that entranced his adherents, and fired them with enthusiasm. An obdurate portion, indeed, of the community were proof against this powerful appeal to their patriotic feelings which the presence of the youthful Chevalier, with his many noble and princely qualities, inspired.

But if their obduracy is to be pardoned, or rather their firmness to the political course which they had adopted, commended ; we can in no case regard, but with contempt and disapprobation, the cruelty and spite of those opponents who, in his own day, derided his just pretensions ; and no less despicable is the heartless, spiteful meanness of those who respect not the ashes of the dead, but would cast reproach upon his memory.

“ The deed that I dar’d, could it merit their malice,
A king and a father to set on his throne ?
His right are these hills, his right are these valleys,
Where wild beasts find shelter, though I can find none.”

Charles was indeed a Stuart worthy of his noble lineage. The appearance of this hero, when he presented himself in the ancient kingdom of his fathers to assert his rights, is de-

scribed by a devoted cavalier who had joined the enterprise ; and on the occasion of Charles reviewing his army at Glasgow, he thus writes. " I am somewhat at a loss to give a description of the Prince as he appeared at the review. No object could be more charming, no personage more captivating, no deportment more agreeable, than his at this time was ; for being well-mounted and princely attired, having all the best endowments of both body and mind, he appeared to bear a sway above any comparison with the heroes of the last age ; and the majesty and grandeur he displayed were truly noble and divine." Another eye-witness—a sober citizen of Glasgow—in reference to the same occurrence, gives this description, after an interval of seventy years, of the impression the Prince made upon *him*. " I managed to get so near to him as he passed homeward to his lodgings, that I could have touched him with my hand ; and the impression which he made upon my mind shall never fade as long as I live. He had a princely aspect, and its interest was much heightened by the de-

jection which appeared in his pale, fair countenance and downcast eye.”*

The offensive appellation of *Pretender* which was given to Charles and his father, gave just umbrage to the friends of the two Chevaliers. “A pretender! what call ye a pretender?” said an honest countryman on the estate of Lude in Blair-Athole, when in company the epithet was used, and he found his blood begin to stir with indignation, “If I were to leave my bonnet in this house and come back for it, or send my son for it, would I be a pretender?”

The devotion to his cause which the Prince’s followers displayed, was no mere casual burst of enthusiasm brought into action by transient excitement. It was a deep-rooted abiding principle of fidelity and honour which is essential to the character of every good citizen. The venerated monarch of these realms, George the Third, whose memory is blessed, fully appreciated the value of those principles that actuated the followers of Charles, know-

* See *Chronicles of Saint Mungo*.

ing well that they were the principles on which the stability of his own government had the surest dependence. In a conversation which took place between the King and Mr Drummond of Charing Cross, alluding to these circumstances, the worthy sovereign said, "Well, Mr Drummond, what are the people in Scotland saying to the state of matters now. Are they reconciled?"

"Sire," replied Mr Drummond, "I can scarcely say they are. But all my friends are Jacobites."

"I am happy to hear you say so," replied King George, "very happy to hear it, for I have found all the Jacobites are *my* best subjects."

Our dear and honoured VICTORIA, I daresay, could respond to the sentiments and experience of her venerable grandfather.

Prince Charles, like many individuals of note, had the misfortune to marry a lady who, whatever her qualities might be, had certainly not those to soothe and sweeten, to a broken heart, the domestic hours spent in the shadow of that disappointment that cast a blight over

the declining years of his life. The warm and glowing affections of his noble nature were ever in the land of his forefathers, and with those dear friends who had sacrificed every thing in his cause; and his tears, indeed, flowed with the "tears of Scotland,"

"Her banished peace, her laurels torn."

He married the Princess Louisa Maria Caroline of Stolberg, in the year 1772. A foreign girl of nineteen could have little sympathy or reciprocal feelings with a person in the decline of life, the Prince being then upwards of fifty, and bowed down with sorrow that none but a congenial soul could have soothed; absorbed as he was with the all-engrossing recollections of the hazardous exploits in which he had engaged, the game he had nobly staked for, and all but won; and now his heart was rankling with wounds of deep anguish on account of those who had suffered for him.

"It is not my sufferings, thus wretched, forlorn;
My brave gallant friends, it's your ruin I mourn"—

are the words the poet has justly put into his

mouth; but in these sufferings and sorrows the youthful Princess could have no share or sympathy. Her own petty trials were naturally the engrossing theme to selfish human nature, and these were memorised with abundant hyperbole by the celebrated Victor Alfieri, the Italian poet, who, like Tasso, viewed with such admiration the royal lady, as blinded him to all misfortunes but her own. The Countess of Albani, or Albany, lived to an advanced age, and died in a convent at Florence in the year 1824. It is needless to recapitulate that the friends of Charles were the truest friends to the government, and most readily advanced to situations of trust. Dr Charles Webster had several honourable appointments. He was made physician to the Prince of Wales (George IV.), and afterwards physician to His Majesty's forces.

In the meantime he had taken an important step—important in every situation of life, but especially to a clergyman, whose domestic arrangements are not unfrequently the subjects of scrutiny, and ought to be in unison with his public character, and come up to the

estimation in which that is held. With Dr Charles Webster it was strictly so, for in the privacy of domestic life, his deportment was even more beautiful and attractive than all those high endowments which he possessed, and which met the public eye. In choosing a partner for life he selected one who could appreciate his estimable qualities, add to his happiness, and value, above all, her own singular good fortune, under divine providence, in being the wife of so gifted an individual ; who cultivated all those domestic and social virtues that diffuse happiness in the family circle.

Dr Charles Webster married Catherine Graham of Balgowan, Perthshire, whose family derive their descent from William Graham or Græme, third son of Sir William Graham, Lord of Kincardine, and the Lady Marota Stuart, his second wife, who was daughter of Robert III., King of Scotland. The family was ennobled in the person of Sir Thomas Graham, who was created a peer of the empire by the title of Baron Lynedoch of Balgowan.

Catherine Graham had many admirers, "but," says a very near relative of her own,

writing on the occasion of her marriage, "she proved her good sense by selecting such an estimable man for her partner as Dr Webster."

Catherine Graham was daughter of Robert Graham of Balgowan and his wife Ann, who was daughter of Sir Thomas Drummond, and grand-daughter of Sir David Thriepland by his first wife Elizabeth, daughter of Sir James Ramsay of Bamff.

Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch, was the son of Robert Graham's elder brother Thomas, by his wife Lady Christian Hope, daughter of the Earl of Hopetoun. His Lordship was the only one of the children of his father and mother who survived childhood, and he had no issue himself, consequently his uncle Robert's son, John Graham, Mrs Webster's only brother, was heir to the estates of Lynedoch and Balgowan, and these have now devolved upon his son, Robert Graham, Mrs Webster's nephew, the present excellent and accomplished proprietor, and representative of the family. Of all the goodly lineage—the long train of knights and nobles which adorned Mrs Webster's line of ancestry, her cousin, whose name

is immortalised for his distinguished services in the Peninsular War, is an individual whose life is of lasting interest in the history of the British empire. Nothing that we can mention of him in the present work can have any pretensions to originality ; but so many various characters have been noticed in this volume, —which is rather a *melange* than a regular memoir of any particular individual,—no apology is necessary for adverting to the illustrious British General, THOMAS GRAHAM—a hero whose achievements in the service of his country render him an object of permanent interest in its annals, and to whose memory the lasting gratitude of posterity is due.

It has been justly said of him, that “ if Ireland can proudly claim Wellington as her own, Scotland has the gratification to feel that

“ Proximos illi tamen occupavit Graham honores.”

He had that courage which defies danger, and that modesty which characterises merit. His skill and intrepidity insured, under Heaven’s blessing, the success which attended his course, and rendered it one invariable line of

victory. With regard to his domestic history—he was born at Balgowan in the year 1750—the same year, as has been stated before, in which his friend, the subject of this memoir, Charles Webster was born.

He married in the year 1774, the Hon. Mary Cathcart, second daughter of the ninth Lord Cathcart. Mary Cathcart was a singularly beautiful woman, and her goodness was equal to her beauty. Her death, on the 26th June 1792, seemed to cast a blight over Lynedoch's whole destiny. Dr Webster was her physician, and attended her with assiduous anxiety to the last moments of her precious existence; and he was also the consoling friend of her disconsolate partner, whose grief was of that overwhelming kind that knew no alleviation; and this break in his domestic felicity seemed to impart a romantic character to the whole tenor of his life; and probably, but for this bereavement he never would have had an opportunity of displaying his valour as a British officer. To alleviate his sorrow and restore his injured health, he was advised to travel, and during his sojourn at Gibraltar he

fell into the society of the officers of the garrison, and thenceforth determined to devote himself to the profession of arms.

In the very commencement of the French Revolution, he foresaw with penetrating discernment the imminent danger to which everything dear to man had become exposed, and leaving the distinguished situation which his birth, talents, and superior qualities and virtues entitled him to hold in his own country, where he was eminently beloved and esteemed, he relinquished a life of ease, and betook himself to arms; and in the war which followed, he, as commander-in-chief, and afterwards as second in command to Wellington, happily turned the fate of Europe.

The mere detail of his progress may be briefly stated; his real services to his country cannot be enumerated. He first commenced them as a volunteer at the siege of Toulon, under Lord Mulgrave, and on his return he raised from among his countrymen a battalion of the 90th regiment, of which he was appointed colonel-commandant. He then accompanied his regiment to Gibraltar, but having a dis-

taste for the idleness which is inseparable from garrison duty he obtained permission to join the Austrian army, where he found ample opportunity of perfecting himself in the art of war. Another advantage which this position afforded him, was that of enabling him to send to the British Government, intelligence of the military operations and diplomatics adopted by the commanders and sovereigns of the Continent.

In 1797 he returned to England, and having joined his regiment he was appointed to act with Sir Charles Stuart in the reduction of Minorca, after which he was employed two years in the blockade of Malta. In the year 1808 he proceeded with Sir John Moore to Sweden, and afterwards served in Spain with that gallant officer, during the fatal campaign which ended in the debarkation of Corunna. In the year following that event, he commanded a division at the siege of Flushing. At Cadiz, in 1810, he commanded the British troops, and the year after he fought and won the memorable battle of Barossa. After this period he joined the immortal Wellington,

and was at the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. But the state of his health rendered it necessary for him to revisit England for a short time to recruit his strength. Early, however, in the following season he returned to the field of action in the Peninsula, and led the left wing at the battle of Vittoria, reduced the town and citadel of St Sebastian, crossed the Bidasoa, and after a severe contest established the British army in the territory of France.

We reap to this day the benefits of Lynedoch's achievements. If they are forgotten their fruits still remain. This warrior lived to the patriarchal age of ninety-three, and retained his active habits to the last. He would have ridden on horseback several miles early in the morning, even in his latest years. And it was no uncommon feat for the venerable hero to surprise his friends at Murthly Castle with a visit before breakfast, to invite his amiable young friend, Mr George Stewart, to come and dine with him, and delivering his message without dismounting, would ride home again with the fresh hue of the morning breeze upon his cheek.

From the year 1826 he held the governorship of Dumbarton Castle. This excellent and disinterested man served his country with the generous ardour of a patriotic and unselfish spirit. We all know the memorable eulogium upon him of Sheridan, who could appreciate qualities which he did not eminently possess himself. "Never," said he, "was there seated a loftier spirit in a braver heart."

On being created a peer, Lynedoch nobly refused a grant of £2000 per annum to himself and his heirs, which was intended to accompany the elevation. He died in a fresh old age, lamented, honoured, and beloved, and his memory is embalmed in the affections of his friends and fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE faithful minister who considers the responsibility of his office, and endeavours to discharge the important trust committed to him, must necessarily have a laborious existence. It is but the ignorant, the vulgar, and the irreligious, that consider the clerical life a life of ease.

No man could be more deeply impressed with a sense of what is required of a minister of the Gospel than Dr Charles Webster, and none more earnestly strove to discharge it. It must be borne in mind that he was not the idol of a popular sect, the blustering hero of platform eloquence, the courageous advancer of some new scheme of religion or fashionable philanthropy. He was the steady, quiet, composed, influential advocate of sacred

truth ; not the noisy assertor of novel doctrines, that at all times have abundant charms for the weak and the unsettled in opinion. *His* influence was silent and sure among all ranks. His position in society placed him amongst the highest ; but his love for his fellow-men made him exert himself for the improvement of all. He laboured unweariedly among the humblest and meanest classes of the people, sparing neither personal toil nor bodily fatigue to soften the hardships of the poor, and promote their moral and spiritual interests. And in the face of much popular ignorance he prosecuted his pious work as a pastor of that church against which at every period since the Reformation in Scotland, a remarkable and ignorant prejudice has prevailed respecting it among the vulgar, to whom the English liturgy is a sealed book. Their hostile prepossessions obstruct their apprehension and blind them to its value ; and by them it is held in as much dislike as by the Papist, whose interests it opposes, and against whose errors it is a standing testimony.

The disuse of the regular reading of the Scrip-

tures in the churches rendered the common people singularly opposed to any instruction but what had the appearance of being spoken spontaneously and extemporaneously by their teachers. The simple reading of a chapter to them, without note or comment, was as great an offence as a pre-composed form of prayer; and a minister reading the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians to the mourners at the grave of a departed friend, was usually pelted, and not unfrequently tumbled by the mob into the open pit, so that they were obliged to give up reading the burial service, except in their own private houses. Wesley, in allusion to these facts, says, "O, what a difference is there between the English and Scotch method of burial! The English does honour to human nature; and even to the poor remains that were once the temple of the Holy Ghost! But when I see in Scotland a coffin put into the earth, and covered up without a word spoken, it reminds me of what was spoken concerning Jehoiakim, 'He shall be buried with the burial of an ass!'"

But notwithstanding the rancour of the op-

ponents of the Episcopal Church, it has held on the calm and even tenor of its way, without flinching from its principles, and it enrols among its members the most intelligent and beneficent of the Christian community—a section of the religious public who are always foremost in promoting and aiding what is good, whether it be in forwarding schemes of charity and benevolence, or in advancing the interests of sound religion and Gospel instruction. The enlightened and influential Episcopalian aids with pleasure and alacrity his fellow-citizen or fellow-Christian, in any scheme founded on right principles, irrespective of the sect or party of the supporters of it, for the educational or religious advancement of those that stand in need of such assistance; and the founders of the seminary or hospital for youth, or of any other benevolent enterprise, are sure to find in *him* one ready and willing with his purse substantially to assist them, and with his prayers to wish them God-speed.

Dr Webster's eminence as a physician, and the high estimation in which his professional abilities were held, brought him into extensive

practice, and his advice was sought eagerly ; and he was consulted both personally and by letter from all quarters. This necessarily involved him in much epistolary correspondence, and his duties were of so onerous a kind—and he never spared himself—that his health suffered from it. Before his entrance upon his pastoral charge, he had publicly lectured upon various topics of medical science, and had given several courses of lectures upon chemistry. But the arduous responsibilities of a Christian minister became the grand object of his life ; and his labours in that respect were not confined to the performance of the public duties of his sacred calling, but the private duties of the pastor's office—the visiting, the consoling, the praying with the afflicted, were piously discharged by him. His rest might indeed be sweet, for *his* was the rest of an approved workman, after the faithful labours of the day are past.

Does the teacher of religion deserve to be forgotten, however eminent his services may have been, unless he be the leader of a sect or party ? Nay, he deserves to be honoured

the more for having kept clear of the temptation which public men have to make to themselves a name, and rally partisans around their own particular standard.

Charles Webster was actuated by principles of the warmest humanity, like those which glowed in the heart of his distinguished relative, Dr Alexander Webster, whose eminent abilities and extensive genius seemed to have descended upon him; and like him he used the excellent talents and gifts with which God had endowed him for the good of his fellow-creatures. To his philanthropy and judicious counsel, various public institutions, both at home and abroad, owe their origin. He devised them, projected and set them agoing, and others carried out his designs. The Public Dispensary, which was founded in Edinburgh in the year 1776, was one of those which he planned. It is a charity which is less liable than others to be abused, as the applicants for its assistance receive nothing but medicine. The corrupt practices, frauds, cruelties, and hidden vices which prevail in many institutions intended for the mitigation

of human affliction, have rendered the very names of hospitals, infirmaries, and other refuges, a terror to the public, who are well aware that the eulogiums passed upon the management of many of them are worse than an empty sound. They are direct falsehoods, probably uttered in ignorance by those who charitably think well of everything that is ostensibly appointed for benevolent purposes ; but which a right investigation would prove too often are like the monastic dens of old, little else than harbours of secret crime, and whose atrocities, if revealed, would seem like exaggerated fictions. The late venerable Dr Duncan, who was Webster's particular friend, and with whom he was on terms of the closest intimacy, carried out his design and organised that useful institution, viz., the Royal Dispensary, into efficient operation, when Dr Webster was visiting other countries and other climates, and carrying with him the good fruits of a beneficent nature wherever he went.

But perhaps the most beautiful aspect of a minister's life to contemplate, is in those scenes veiled in obscurity and privacy, when,

stealing away from human observation, he enters the chilling abodes of the sons and daughters of poverty, where disease, in loathsome vestments, presides over the mortal destinies of that unhappy portion of the human family.

Every great city has its times of peculiar visitation. We of the nineteenth century have seen the Destroying Angel oftener than once spread out his wings and fly across our atmosphere, shooting abroad the arrows of death. Nor was the foregoing century free from such visitations, whatever name the pestilence might assume. And at that time, when there was not a hundredth part of what is said and done now about improving the condition of the poor, when a virulent contagion was raging in the lanes and alleys of Edinburgh, causing dismay and consternation among the upper sections of society, lest it should reach *them*, it was thought no dereliction of Christian practice, but rather the reverse, that clergymen and medical men should avoid the infected localities, lest they should be the means of communicating the disease. For

not to endanger their safety by contact was rather thought a duty which they owed to themselves, as well as to the many valuable lives of the citizens who were providentially furnished with the means of protecting themselves from the infection.

The wretched poor were thus left to perish in their hovels deserted by all. But there was one good Samaritan that pitied his suffering brethren. Dr Charles Webster devoted himself to their relief. With the heart of a Christian minister as well as of a philanthropist, and the wisdom of an experienced physician, he braved the danger and performed the charitable work alone. Not a close nor a by-way, nor hidden alley was left unexplored by him ; and day by day, with indefatigable humanity, while the contagion lasted, he visited the sick and the dying, carrying in his pockets the cordials and the nourishment as well as the medicines which they required ; and *there*, in the dark and dreary abodes whose pitiable inmates were smitten with the stroke of mortal sickness, with the bare blank walls around him, and not a chair for his accom-

modation, he might be seen upon his knees a picture of placid benevolence and humility, feeding with his gentle hand the emaciated sufferers, dipping each morsel of bread into the wine which he had brought with him, and administering it to their parched lips.

Many through his instrumentality were raised up from what would have been to them the bed of death; and it is hoped that some were raised up also to newness of life, for while he ministered to their temporal wants he did not neglect their more important spiritual necessities; and they who had lived in ignorance or neglect of God's grace and mercy in Christ Jesus were taught by him the way of salvation. Such is but a glimpse of the secret history of his benevolence.

The man who was admired and courted for his accomplishments as a gentleman and a scholar, shone in the gilded drawing-room amidst admiring circles with a lustre far short of that which invested him in such scenes as these, where there was none to behold him but the lowly recipients of his charity, and the approving eye of his Divine Master, whose blessed footsteps he humbly attempted to follow.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE frail though beautiful tenement of clay in which the heaven-born spirit dwells, and which we love to look upon, allows, we are apt to think, its celestial inhabitant to escape too soon to the regions of unclouded light, to enjoy that holy rest and felicity—*that* unmingled repose and joy that the elect of God in Christ Jesus are promised in those mansions prepared for them. Charles Webster was one of those bright spirits that seemed too soon to take its flight to another sphere. His earthly career was bright indeed, and he shone with untarnished lustre to the end. His sweet and placid countenance, his saintly expression, his humble yet dignified demeanour, his genuine sincerity and purity of heart, endeared him to every one; and the announcement of his death filled many hearts with woe and many homes with mourning. He died in a foreign land, in an Indian island where he

had been recommended to go to recruit his health, and there his precious remains await the resurrection of the just. His pious and indefatigable labours in the work of the ministry had often obliged him to repair his exhausted strength with travelling, and yet those journeys were hardly recreations, for he made all of them subservient to the charge which he had to keep. He never for a moment seemed to forget that he had talents committed to him which he must restore with interest; that he had his stipulated work to perform in the vineyard, ere he could receive his penny. A sea-voyage was deemed expedient for him; and being physician to His Majesty's forces, he accompanied them on the expedition to the West Indies early in 1795.

The voyage had a beneficial effect, and for a season his health was restored, and he was enabled to fulfil the important duties of his official medical situation, and to exercise also the functions of his sacred calling. He preached as opportunity permitted, and neglected no means of usefulness that were within his reach. This continued till the end of the

year, when some epidemic peculiar to the climate seized him ; and, after the brief space in which disease under a tropical sky does its work, his earthly frame was dissolved, and, to the inexpressible grief of all, he took his departure to the world of spirits.

When the account of his death reached England, it is needless to say that overwhelming sorrow and dismay was the result of the intelligence. The commander of the troops, in writing home, stated in the commencement of his despatch that Dr Webster was in excellent health and spirits, and actively engaged as usual. The postscript of the same letter announced that Dr Webster was no more. He had caught the contagion, and fell a victim. If the reflections and regrets that he ever left home, which bitter sorrow forced from bereaved hearts, were sinful, God grant that they may have been forgiven ; and that the tears of disappointment, and perhaps of repining human nature, may not be laid to the charge of his friends, his flock, his brethren, his family, his widow, and his weeping orphans.

The following brief sketch of him is prefixed to a volume of his sermons, which were printed in London many years after his death :—

“ The author of the sermons now offered to the public was long a distinguished character in the Episcopal Church at Edinburgh, where, in the year 1791, he founded St Peter’s Chapel. Unhappily for his congregation, he soon after lost his health, which compelled him for a time to relinquish his charge, and he committed it to the care of his nephew and another colleague, while he sought, in a warmer and more congenial climate, a renovation that might enable him to resume his ministry. At different intervals he returned, and made the attempt. It was, however, but an attempt : his own solicitude to remain at his post (for which he was by zeal and ability eminently qualified), and the affectionate wishes of his friends and attendants at his pulpit to have him in the midst of them, were not gratified,—the Almighty thought proper to dispose of him otherwise.

“ Dr Webster had united the study of the

two noblest professions of man. He had formerly studied and successfully practised physic, on which he publicly lectured, when a voyage was advised, in the hope of the sea-air proving beneficial to him ; and in the summer of 1795 he was appointed physician to His Majesty's forces then going to the West Indies, whither he accompanied them. In the month of December in the same year he died at the Island of St Vincent.

“The character of Dr Webster may be briefly summed up by saying that his faith was consonant to the sacred doctrines he preached, and that his life exemplified the divine precepts he enforced. His hand was ever open to assist the needy, his heart was ever ready to sympathise with the afflicted ; he was solicitous to comfort the comfortless, to speak peace to all. A diligent promoter of the eternal happiness of others, he eagerly for himself sought after the portion which fadeth not away. In a temporal view, he possessed high literary endowments, for which he was greatly esteemed both in his own country and among foreigners. He was

an ornament to society, and an invaluable friend.

“The present volume is a selection from such of his sermons as are preserved, and which are highly venerated by his children. With the exception of the first, none of them were composed with a view to publication, but written occasionally for the sole purpose of instructing and edifying his own congregation, whose spiritual interests were most dear to him, and by whom he was beloved and esteemed. The sermons are printed as they were originally written, and as they were delivered to his audience, over whose hearts and minds his energetic eloquence gave them a powerful and lasting sway. By those who heard them from his own lips they will naturally be read with double interest, from emotions renewed by the memory of their loved pastor, and by the soul-cheering hope of joining him hereafter in those regions of bliss and glory, the way to which he pointed out to them and led; but to every reader of a pious mind it is hoped that they will be useful and acceptable.”

CHAPTER XX.

To speculate upon what Dr Charles Webster might have accomplished for the Church and the cause of humanity, had his valuable life been prolonged to old age, is not expedient. In his brief term of probation he had done much ; and if his sun went down while it was yet day, it was doubtless the will and the wise appointment of his Heavenly Father that this devoted servant of *His* should be translated from the narrow range of this mortal scene to the wide ethereal expanse of spiritual bliss and enjoyment in his more immediate presence.

The first account of his death which his family received, was an official communication to his colleague, the Rev. John Webster, who on receiving the intelligence brake out into a loud burst of irrepressible grief. He was alone in his library when the letter came to him. The unusual sounds of anguish that issued

from his quiet study alarmed his household, who hastened to him. He wept aloud, and was unable for a time to restrain his tears.

Charles Webster died at a period of life when many individuals are only beginning their career of usefulness or greatness, and brilliant success in the world. He had seen little more than two score years.

The Rev. John Webster continued with an assistant, the Rev. A. Allan, to fill his uncle's place in the ministry, and held the joint charges of St Paul's and St Peter's till his death.

St Paul's has stood amidst many changes, political and social, for nearly two centuries; and under the enjoyment of that protection granted by the Act of Queen Anne, intituled "An Act to prevent the disturbing those of the Episcopal Communion in Scotland in the exercise of their religious worship, and in the use of the Liturgy of the Church of England," many ministers of superior talent, as well as eminent piety, have filled its pulpit, and preached within its consecrated walls the glad tidings of salvation; and during that long

period so many able men have been trans-
placed from *it* to other fields of usefulness,
that it was not inappropriately styled the
“Nursery.”

St Peter's, after the death of the Rev. John Webster, was for a long period of years under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr Walker, and subsequently the Rev. Dr Terrot, who now presides over the diocese, and is a prelate equally admired and esteemed for his eminent abilities and his private virtues.

The present incumbent of St Peter's, the Rev. George Coventry, is a sound, judicious preacher, and a first-rate biblical scholar.

Dr Charles Webster had three daughters, viz., Anne Agnes Pitcairne Webster, Janet Thriepland Webster, and Thomina Webster, who inherited the amiable and estimable qualities of their father and mother. They were ladies of high and elegant accomplishments, well fitted to adorn the distinguished circles in which they moved. The youngest was said to be the finest private player on the harp in the metropolis.

Dr Webster was held in much estimation

in England, where he had many friends and relatives—the Wedderburns, Websters, &c., &c., as well as various other branches of kindred allied to him by collateral affinity. The advantages to his children being obvious, induced his family to remove thither, and Mrs Webster died in London several years after the death of her lamented partner.

Dr Webster's character may be gathered from the imperfect attempt which the author has made to sketch his history; and it is only to be regretted, that from the circumstance of his dying abroad, and his children being then in their infancy, his MSS., and other valuable papers, have many of them been irrecoverably lost or scattered. Some of his sermons which were published about sixteen years after his death, consequently appeared under the many disadvantages which always attend the attempt to present to the world posthumous works of distinguished individuals; many selections being such portions as were never intended to assume the form of print. But the writer is by that time beyond the earthly feelings of dissatisfaction or disappointment

that the mementoes of him which affectionate friends have attempted to preserve, have come forth without the benefit of his own careful supervision. The sermons, however, though late of appearing, had an extensive circulation, and were eagerly sought for by his almost innumerable friends and acquaintances, who cherished his memory with the most affectionate regard. They were dedicated to the late good Marchioness of Cholmondeley, with whose family he was on terms of intimacy. That lady valued his friendship much, and shewed great kindness to his survivors. She used to say to his daughters, with much feeling, "If ever there was a good man, it was your excellent father."

A friend in London thus writes of him, Sept. 15, 1846. "I have seen an account of Dr Webster in some biographical work. I do not remember the exact words, but it stated, that he possessed much learning, great talents, a superior and highly-cultivated mind; and made mention also of the singular sweetness of his disposition and gentleness of manners. I have thrown upon paper the opinions of

some friends who knew him, and who are all characters of the highest standing. What an irreparable loss to his family was such a man! In speaking of him, his very old friend Dr M'Donnell says, 'I have lived long, and travelled far, but never met with his equal. He was a man of great learning, which was acknowledged at home and abroad; but his benevolence of disposition, sweetness of temper, kindness of heart, were not to be surpassed. He was in deed and in truth single-hearted. Such must be the opinion of all who, like myself, had the advantage of the intimate acquaintance of that excellent—superexcellent man.'

"Miss Rattray of Craighall, grand-daughter of Bishop Rattray, a venerable lady whom Bishop Jolly justly considered to be a pattern of goodness, thus writes of him:—'Never did I know, nor could there be a worthier character. Pious and devout, humane and charitable, his heart beat with benevolence to all mankind; he sympathized in all their distresses, helped in all difficulties, and was indeed to every one, as far as he could, a friend in need. His manners were

most endearing, mild, gentle, and feeling. Beloved by all who knew him, those who knew him best loved and esteemed him most. His friendship I experienced, and he was my mother's friend.'

" I have seen a piece of plate presented to him by Lady Anne Erskine, bearing an inscription, in which that worthy lady expresses the sincere regard, respect, and esteem entertained for him by her.

" Mr Ferick, a young man of fortune, who on first entering life had letters of introduction to Dr Webster, ever after retained for him the highest esteem and regard ; often spoke of him ; and declared he never met with any one so kind, so good, so entirely disinterested.

" Mr Iveson, an old friend, who knew him when quite a young man, always named him as one of his most esteemed friends, and said he was beloved by every one, and that it may be said with truth, that his memory is venerated by all who knew him.

" To these testimonies of valued individuals many more might be added, all tending to

shew how universally he was beloved and looked up to.

“ The accomplished Lady Perceval, in her epistolary correspondence with Dr Webster, thus concludes one of her letters to him. Referring to some important business, she says, ‘ The transaction, however, is going on, and will be completed as soon as may. In the meantime, I am very anxious your departure from town may not take place before that time, as, having the public boast of such friendship as yours, my brother might put every trust in the overthrow of his enemies.—Upper Brook Street, May 12.’ ”

But it is needless to multiply instances of the confidence that was reposed in his judgment, and the respect in which he was held. Few of his friends now survive to peruse this Memoir of him, and who could all cordially respond to the just eulogiums bestowed upon his memory ; but of the few who do survive, and who remember him well, I would not omit to mention the Hon. Mrs Carstairs Bruce, a lady who possesses as warm a heart as ever

glowed in a human breast. The law of kindness is her rule; and except for the infirmities of extreme old age, she would be as actively engaged as she invariably has been throughout her long life in the Christian and philanthropic discharge of every benevolent duty. She was Elizabeth Cecilia Rollo, daughter of James, seventh Lord Rollo, and sister of the excellent nobleman of that name, whom we have already mentioned. She was much attached to Dr Webster, and attended his ministry, and like her brother, who was enthusiastic in his praises, she thought him perfect. She also, like him, loved for his sake every one of the name of Webster.

Another of Dr Webster's early friends and attendants on his ministry was the venerable Lady Saltoun, who died recently at a very advanced age. Many of his flock, who have long ago gone to their final rest in the grave, cherished a fond remembrance of him to their latest hours, and some of them never could mention his name without shedding tears. His manners and appearance were peculiarly prepossessing. He bore in his aspect, it is

said, a striking indication of the Christian humility that reigned in his heart, and which imparts the truest dignity to the whole character. He was about the middle stature, well-formed, dignified yet modest in his deportment, and the expression of his countenance was beautiful and full of sweetness. He had naturally an elegance of manners and address, that was undoubtedly heightened by the high culture of his mind. The only likeness of him that is extant is a picture done by the Duchess of Albany. During his frequent visits to the Continent, he had various opportunities of seeing that lady, and much interesting matter might have been furnished had an account of his travels been preserved. The Duchess of Albany, the daughter of Prince Charles, is a personage that deserves to be honoured and respected for her filial duty to her father in the sorrowing years of his life, after his blighted hopes. On one occasion of her visiting Britain, she came over under Dr Webster's care. She had a great respect for him, and she amused herself on

shipboard by drawing his likeness, and she afterwards presented to him a finished miniature of himself.

The Prince of Wales (George IV.) admired her much, and it was reported, had his inclinations been consulted, would have married her, had such a union been compatible for him as heir to the British throne. He shewed, on various occasions, that he possessed many of those magnanimous and princely virtues which ought to adorn an exalted position in society; and, in one instance, it was signally displayed in the graceful monumental tribute which he raised at Rome to the memory of Prince Charles and his father.

Dr Charles Webster was so perfectly free from vanity, that he was by no means an egotist. He had few or no stories to tell about himself: his own doings were never the subject of his conversation. But had there been some faithful chronicler at the time to record the incidents connected with his life, there would no doubt have been ample materials for a biography of him, both of an in-

structive and of an amusing character. An anecdote of the latter kind was related of him by a respectable individual who figured in the scene himself.

Dr Webster had such frequent occasion to journey from home, that he was well known in the different localities to which duty or business called him. Once when he happened to travel by a stage-coach to Montrose, on alighting from it and approaching the inn, he encountered Mr Ritchie, a gentleman who was at that time a fashionable teacher of dancing in Edinburgh. Dr Webster, with his usual urbanity and politeness, conversed with him till they reached the inn, and then, with his accustomed courtesy, asked him into the parlour. The landlady, hearing of Dr Webster's arrival with another guest, hastened to attend the distinguished visitors herself, and shewed the most obsequious and ceremonious attentions, and made the best display her house could afford. Dr Webster's allotted space of time soon passed away, and rising to depart, he blandly said, "Good day, Mr Ritchie," and walked out of the room. The

landlady heard the brief parting salute, and turning round with the most provoked air of mortification to the professor of dancing, and eyeing him with a look not to be described, she exclaimed in a tone of mingled vexation, astonishment, and derisive anger,—“ Mr Ritchie! Mr Ritchie! Are *you* Mr Ritchie the dancing-master? I took you for a lord or some great man, and *you* Mr Ritchie the dancing-master!” And the disappointed matron flounced out of the room with indignation, leaving the astounded guest to meditate on the absurdness and vanity of human nature.

CHAPTER XXI.

THESE memoirs and sketches are now drawing towards a close ; but before concluding this book, in which much extraneous matter has been introduced not indicated by the title, and which may be regarded as the sermon which does not keep closely to its text, I hope to be allowed to add a few words concerning individuals mentioned in the course of the work, whom I could flatter myself (perhaps mistakenly) have not been altogether without interest.

It has been often said that notices of private characters are not calculated to interest the public, and are consequently quite out of place when any attempt is made to draw attention to them,—that expressions of respect or regard for departed friends, however estimable for their domestic virtues, are quite unsuitable, and can claim no sympathy from strangers. This, in point of fact, I would

humbly venture to say, is not the case. I speak from my own experience, which may not improbably be that of others. How often does the most simple narrative affect us ; or touching incident in the life of an individual of no importance, or in the humblest obscurity, whom we never heard of before ? The history of a little child at a village school, or of a negro boy taught to believe the Gospel—the resignation of an aged believer and humble sufferer, in her solitary cottage, encompassed with chilling penury, but blessed with godly contentment, awaiting patiently the fondly anticipated emancipation of her sanctified spirit from a body of pain and death,—these and such as these, have interested me more than the exploits of the great, the achievements of warriors, or the brilliant career of statesmen. It is the Christian life in the soul, and as it is exhibited in the daily actions, that is all-important and of permanent and eternal interest ; and this is an assertion which has the signet of Divine truth set upon it ; and it is on this account that the simple statistics of humble virtue exemplified

in the lives of persons perhaps the most insignificant in their social or worldly position—the meek endurance of bitter disappointment and wrong—the filial devotion of unselfish love and affection, the self-denial, the disinterested manifestations of friendship—the lowly submission to hopeless poverty—and above all, the faith in the Divine word and promise that no adversity can shake, have a power over the mind, that the records of mere worldly greatness can never produce.

If the reader have, therefore, gone along with me in my narration of plain and simple facts, there may be one or two individuals noticed in this volume concerning whom, before we part company, he may not be unwilling to hear a few words more. Before concluding, we advert again to Charles Webster's brother George, and glance at the closing scene of his well-spent life. He lived till past the allotted period of man's existence, being upwards of seventy years when he died. Bishop Strachan attended him in his last illness, with all that affectionate solicitude which he owed to him as a friend and relative, and still

more with that veneration and regard which he felt for him as an eminent Christian. He often said as he stood by his death-bed and gazed upon him, " Oh, he is a precious sheaf ready to be gathered in !" His sickness was not above nine or ten days' continuance,—and it may be said to have been his first as well as his last illness. He had enjoyed a long life of uninterrupted health ; and now, when the Divine mandate came to summon him to put off the earthly tabernacle, he was found ready and prepared to obey. His whole life had been a preparation for that great change. His heart was fixed on the contemplation of the great work of redemption—a work of surpassing wonder and astonishment ; and the more surprising in wonder and glory it appeared, as the soul was approaching to the experience of its reality. If any man might have counted upon his good deeds for his acceptance with God, it might have been he, but he disclaimed all merit. He knew that salvation was the purchase of the Redeemer's work alone.

" Himself was but a sinner saved,
By grace, by grace divine."

The strong integrity of his disposition manifested throughout his long life was conspicuous to the last. On one occasion, a day or two before he died, he was in a kind of half-slumbering state, when he suddenly wakened up and said, "Who was that that passed by the bed just now?"

One of his daughters who was attending him and was seated at a window, said to him, with a view, no doubt, to compose him, "It was I, dear father."

His recollection instantly returned to him, and he said, "No, Isabella, it was not *you*. You have never risen from that seat. Remember TRUTH. Never even to soothe a sick person deceive, or say what is not the case."

The godly parent's dying admonition was never forgotten. Words fitly spoken such as these are indeed jewels to be treasured up.

When the spirit had taken its departure, he had the bloom of health still upon his cheeks. The colour did not forsake them; and when he was laid in his coffin, no appearance of the last enemy was there. He was like one in health taking a sweet sleep; no mark of age

was on his placid brow. His teeth, which were singularly white, were entire and perfect, the result no doubt of moderation, temperance, exercise, regularity, and godliness which hath the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

In summing up the character of Mr George Webster, who ranked so high as a private Christian, it is not to be thought that he was deficient in any of the relations of life. His general benevolence of heart has been mentioned oftener than once. His sentiments were high and honourable. He was a worthy citizen, a loyal-hearted subject, an excellent husband and father, an equitable and kind master, a staunch and generous friend, valuable for the prudence of his counsels—a wise-hearted man in all respects, steady and consistent in his religious and political principles; an humble, prayerful, earnest Christian, a worthy example to all who knew him. His secular matters he managed with much discretion. As a landlord he was humane and tender-hearted. It was a well-paid rent, he thought, which was paid at Candlemas, and

he never sought any of his payments before then. Twice a-year he invited his tenants of a superior class to an entertainment, not to revelry or feasting, but to a handsome collation or *dejeuner à la fourchette*, where excellent viands in abundant variety were set forth to his guests, with the accompaniment of tea.

Heartfelt happiness always prevailed at these friendly banquets, which were long remembered with pleasure by those who participated in them.

His tenants of the humbler class were allowed to come as it suited their own convenience, and to each as they came was a hospitable and substantial meal served out. He was beloved and honoured throughout his long life, and after death his memory was blessed.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN relating domestic events, can it be out of place to devote a short chapter to the subject of servants, on whom the happiness of families so much depend? Servants are an important class of the community, who are characterized too often by their employers as a necessary evil; and are frequently great destroyers of family concord, from the defective moral training of their early years, and the examples set before them as they advance in their progress through the world, which are not calculated to rectify their principles or promote their improvement. Without entering into any particular statements regarding this subject, which would be unsuitable on the present occasion, it may be remarked that nothing could be more desirable than that households at least were all members of the same commu-

nion, and that master and servants should belong to one religious body. The domestic discomfort arising from a different state of things is too obvious to require much illustration. Families in Scotland, belonging to the Presbyterian Church, have no difficulty in finding respectable servants of the same persuasion with themselves. But how are Episcopal families situated? They can find none; and the consequence is that there is little sympathy of religious feeling between the heads of families and those whom they hire into their houses. This observation does not apply to the high and fashionable worldly circles, who engage servants of any creed and any country into their employment, and with whom sound principles are not an essential; but it refers to the religious, respectable, God-fearing portion of the Episcopal Church, whose domestic happiness would be materially increased if they and their households together worshipped their Creator and Redeemer with one heart and one mind. The advantage of this would be doubly felt where there were children or in-

valids. The value of intelligent, religiously-educated servants would then be appreciated as it ought. It would be well if, amidst the many schemes of philanthropy, some benevolent individuals would leave an adequate foundation for the express training of Episcopal (female) servants in Scotland. Much social and national good would spring from such an institution. It is lamentable to remark, in the present day, that servants, who ought to be a valuable section of the social circle, are in a state of almost entire insubordination. This arises, for the most part, from their total want of sound parental instruction and moral training. And as they have no definite religious education at home, so the places of public worship which they in general frequent are offshoots of different sects torn asunder with factious disputations, where the moralities and duties of life are never taught.

Pious masters and mistresses are not satisfied merely with hirelings that will do their stipulated work and not steal their goods; but they are anxious to have Christian men and women in their employment and under

their roof—fellow-heirs, in short, of the same promises, and travellers with themselves Zionward. Next to the example of the godly parent, is that of the faithful and religious domestic to whose care children or youth are intrusted.

These remarks are a prelude to one or two notices of individuals in that humble but important station, whose influence was not lost in the families whom they served. Of the various admirable examples of faithful domestics, both male and female, we select a few of the household of Mr and Mrs Thomas Webster. There was in particular a family of brothers and sisters of the name of Carmylie who were successively in their service and in that of Mr and Mrs George Webster. These Carmylies had principles and piety that would have adorned any station. Betty Carmylie and her sisters Nanny and Lily, were in Mrs Webster's nursery, and under their attendance were Charles Webster and his brothers' infant years passed. Betty, when advanced in life and unable for active service, was appointed to a responsible situation as house-

keeper at the Methodist chapel, to which the manse or parsonage-house was attached, which she took charge of.

John Carmylie's life might have furnished a volume of edifying Christian experience. He lived to a great age, and when he became old and decrepit and bedridden, he longed only to hear the preaching of the Word. This wish was gratified as far as circumstances would permit; a small house was hired for him in a court close to the church, and in the summer season the aged saint was carried out on a bed and laid in the court near the open windows of the sacred edifice, and there he joyfully caught the sounds as they fell from the preacher's lips. He was like some of those "impotent folk" that waited on the ministry of the holy apostles. His faith was very great, and he lived so close to his God that the life of that humble believer was a continual realizing of the Divine presence. He gave himself much to secret prayer, and prayed often with the other members of his family, who frequently united together in offering up in their lowly dwelling prayers for

especial blessings on the Church of God at large, and on their benefactors. When John Webster was a youth preparing for the ministry, and his father and mother no doubt felt some solicitude about him, these humble, earnest followers of our Blessed Lord set apart particular occasions when they met to pray for him. This was unknown to any one, till one day, when Mrs George Webster was expressing some anxiety about her son, her faithful maid, Nanny Carmylie, modestly informed her of the fact. "Fear not," said she, with that humility which genuine religion produces; "Fear not, with respect to your son, to devote him to the service of God; we have often met together to make special supplications at the throne of grace on his behalf, and I hope our prayers have been heard."

This is a gratifying instance of what God-fearing servants can do; and it is no trivial matter to have their prayers. We would readily record worldly honours and worldly distinctions, or flattering marks of favour from distinguished men, and why pass over in silence those who, if they had neither gold

nor silver to bestow, gave what they had, and in so doing gave much more—gave their earnest and effectual prayers.

It was a favourite and oft-repeated saying of John Carmylie to his mistress,—“Madam, there are three *shalls* in Scripture, on which we may rest in confidence and hope. The three *shalls* are indeed precious assurances.” This was in reference to the seventh verse of the seventh chapter of St Matthew’s Gospel, “Ask and it *shall* be given you, seek and ye *shall* find, knock and it *shall* be opened unto you.”

No doubt this humble, devoted servant of God felt especially in his own experience the truth of the gracious promise annexed to the Divine command.

Isobel Keiller, Nathan Kirkaldy, and James Rogers, were other favourable specimens of the domestics of the last century, whose names were preserved with respect as members of the household of Charles Webster’s parents. The last of these worthies scrupulously confined his reading to the Bible and the newspapers. “The one,” he said, “told him

of the grace of God, and the other the providence of God in the daily occurrences of life ; and Divine grace and Divine providence were all that he had to do with."

The influence upon the infant mind of a pious servant must be great, and probably John Webster's gravity and seriousness may be partly traced to that cause. His nurse was Mary Rattray, a Highland woman, whose father was in the service of the Duke of Atholl, and was drowned in humanely attempting to save a sheep that had fallen into the river at Dunkeld. From this afflictive circumstance the Duchess took care of the widow and orphans, and Mary Rattray, one of the daughters, went to be nurse in Mrs George Webster's family. She was only imperfectly acquainted with the English language, but she was eloquent in her own. She had a special gift of prayer, and never did she put the infant to bed or take him up but she uttered audibly a fervent supplication on his behalf. In the course of some years her health declined, and she became unable for active house service. She was then sent to Kinnordy, to

Mr Lyell's, to feed the poultry there, where she passed the remainder of her life. She had an only son, a sickly boy, who died. His last illness was long and painful, but in him was strikingly exemplified that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings praise is perfected, for in the bitterness of his affliction his lips overflowed with the praises of God. He talked as one who realized the beatific vision. He was evidently taught of the Divine Spirit; and so remarkable was the utterance of the dying child, that persons came from every part of the country to hear the gracious words that dropped like jewels from his lips.

Another one I mention before concluding this subject is Miss F—, a person who was employed by Mrs George Webster. Her mother, and a married sister, together with her whole family of children, had been swept away by some infectious fever; and, thus bereaved, she was left to keep her disconsolate father's house; which duty she discharged so admirably, that, if ever a creature was perfect on earth, she might have been said to be so. She had occasion to call, one Saturday evening, on

Mrs George Webster. Having despatched her business with that lady, she was departing, when the children—who were very fond of her—clustered round her, and detained her with their talk. She mildly said she must hasten away, as she had a few stitches to put in that night in something she had to mend, but she hoped she would see them all at the chapel on the morrow. She hastened home, and retired to bed early. At midnight she was seized with illness. The conflict was great; it was a sharp trial for her faith. Her sufferings were intense, and continued without intermission or alleviation. A line next day was sent to the chapel before morning service, requesting for her the prayers of the congregation; but in a short space of time another line, countermanding the former, was handed to Bishop Strachan, telling him not to pray for her, as she was dead. Her sufferings were then at an end, and her unalterable doom was fixed. The blast was indeed a fierce one, but it was soon over; and amidst the anguish of her bodily sufferings her resignation was sublime. She disclaimed all trust in her own

works ; and, anxious to testify her entire dependence on her Redeemer, though almost unable to speak, she continued the whole night, till her lips closed in death, to repeat these two affecting lines :—

“ If one good thought could save me, Lord,
Not one good thought have I.”

The beauty of the Christian faith is best set forth by living examples, and as these are manifested in the ordinary relations, and in the everyday occurrences of life. Therefore nothing is trivial or unimportant that tends to give evidence of the Divine influence that actuates the hearts of those who adorn the doctrines of their heavenly Master.

We are too apt to identify high arguments in favour of some particular opinions, with religion itself. Weak minds are acted upon by powerful speaking and noisy rhetoric, but not salutarily. They become imbued or inflamed (according to the temperament), either with a dogmatic prejudice, or a blind zeal in favour of certain tenets, to the exclusion of all others ; and the relative duties of life are entirely thrown into the shade. The

social bonds that unite families and households are broken and destroyed. What are they to the bigot or enthusiast, who prefers the notions of his favourite teacher to the plain precepts of the Word of God? When the vast superstructure of idolatrous Christianity reared in the dark ages of the Church is entirely overthrown and swept away, and the world presents in its stead a wide and waste howling wilderness of infidelity, the City of the Lord, where He loveth to dwell,—His Zion, which is compacted together,—will remain secure by His favour, in the strength alone of the brotherly love and social harmony that reign within its walls.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOME time after Mr George Webster's death, his widow removed to Edinburgh, and took a house there, that she might be near her son John, who was prosecuting his pastoral labours in that city with acceptance and success.

The example and admonitions of his godly parents were now shewing forth their fruits. The seminary or the public institution may be excellent in their way; but it is the early instructions received around the parental hearth, and illustrated by the living examples of a father and mother who are themselves devoted to the service of God, and anxious to dedicate their offspring to the same Divine Master,—that is the most sure and lasting foundation of a religious education, and John Webster had been blessed with those advantages in an eminent degree.

From his advancement in theology and readiness for the sacred ministry, he was admitted to holy orders a year or two before the stated time. Like Spencer at Liverpool,—whose beautiful but brief Christian course it is refreshing to contemplate,—the rule in his case was dispensed with. Mrs Webster had the satisfaction to see her hopes fulfilled with respect to him. Her grandchildren were to her a solace and delight, and some years passed on that seemed to repay her maternal heart for all its solicitude. But this was not to be of long continuance. Afflictive dispensations from the hand of God came in rapid succession, and bowed down her wounded but submissive spirit.

Her son George (a noble-hearted young man), a surgeon in the 80th regiment, died, after a very brief illness, when his regiment was on the march.

Her grandson, George Charles Webster, died; and then her grandson, John Webster, a child of five years old, a boy of great promise, and the darling—perhaps the idol—of the family, was taken away.

Her own frame began to shew indications of breaking up, and she gradually sunk after twelve months' lingering illness. All that filial affection could do was done for her by her children, and in particular by her dutiful daughter and namesake, Elizabeth, whose devotion to her venerated parent was beyond all praise. But a severe stroke still awaited her before her own departure. Her son John, who she had hoped would close her eyes and lay her head in the grave, was carried to the tomb before her. Bereaved of his children and his brother, and seeing the approach of his beloved mother's dissolution, he was sorely tried and afflicted. His heart was peculiarly affectionate and tender, and grief sat heavily upon him. He began to complain of illness, but not seriously, and still persevered in his pastoral labours. His last sermon, which was preached the Sunday before his death, was from these words, "We bring our years to an end as it were a tale that is told." (Psalm xc. 9.) On the Friday following he entered into the rest that remaineth for the people of God. The impressiveness of his manner in the pulpit,

his fine voice, and the beautiful and effective way in which he read the Word of God and the Service of the Church, were remarked by all who heard him. He was endeared to his flock, as his uncle had been before him, but he was taken away from them in the prime of his days, and many were the tears of their affectionate regret that they were so early deprived of the teaching of one under whom their souls' health prospered.

John Webster was an accomplished scholar, and his literary attainments were considerable.

He possessed one of the finest private libraries at that time in the Scottish capital; and amidst the valuable tomes with which it was stored, he passed much of his time in research and study. In his person he was tall and noble-looking. His complexion was dark, and his eye penetrating; but the natural dignity of his whole figure and deportment was divested of hauteur by the suavity of his manners, the subdued mildness of his disposition, and the genuine tenderness of his heart.

His death was not immediately communicated to his mother, but due caution was used

to prepare her for the intelligence, which she afterwards received with the meek submission of a heart entirely, and during her long and exemplary life, devoted to God's will.

Every appearance of grief was concealed from her for a time, but a curious circumstance occurred on his burial-day. Just as the funeral train was passing by her house, and *she* confined to her room in her sick-chair, quite ignorant of the fact, she suddenly exclaimed to a near relative who was sitting beside her, " Oh, I feel very faint, give me, give me a little cold water."

Some persons are so constituted, that they are, if possible, of too compassionate and too feeling a nature. John Webster seemed to have been one of those, and in consequence had many trials to his feelings that men of more blunt sensibilities are happily spared. On one occasion, when Dr Charles Webster was in the course of his public duties called upon officially to attend the execution of two unfortunate men who were condemned to death for robbing a bank, he took along with him to the sad scene his youthful colleague in

the ministry ; but whenever the two malefactors made their appearance on the scaffold, and took their station beside the clergymen, John Webster sank down in a dead faint.

The acuteness of his feelings, when his affections were strongly rivetted, must have been intense and lasting. The death of his sons was a severe stroke to his paternal heart. When his eldest boy died, he bore up with surprising fortitude, expressed his resignation to the physician, Dr Munro, thanked him cordially for his attention, and put five guineas into his hand. "Oh, no, no," said the good doctor, returning the money, "God forbid, you have lost enough."

But this death was not the only breach to be made in his domestic circle ; his second son, John, was next singled out for the mark of the "insatiate archer." He had in an especial manner endeared himself to his grandmother. His vivacity and cheerfulness, and affectionate attachment to herself from the first time he saw her, won her heart. On one occasion that his father and mother were going out to pay a visit, when the child saw the carriage drive

off from the door and he not allowed to accompany them, he burst into tears and could not be pacified. Mrs George Webster, who was there at the time, tried to soothe the disappointed little boy, but without effect. His maid slipped out of the room, dressed herself in a master of arts' gown, and a clerical hat and wig, and so disguised herself that recognition was impossible. The entrance of this figure immediately quieted the sobbing child. He instantly wiped his tears, and, stepping up to Mrs George Webster, gravely said to her, "Grandmamma, God never made that man. That man must have made himself."

The sayings of innocent children are interesting and engaging to those to whom they are near and dear, and Mrs George Webster treasured up many little anecdotes of her darling, of whom she was so soon bereaved. The complaint of which he died was hooping-cough. He was sent to her house for change of air. How that child had engaged the affections of all, it is impossible to describe. He was one of those precious lambs of Christ's fold that early entered into the

green pastures of the heavenly Canaan, and in so doing escaped much affliction and temptation that would doubtless have been his lot in this life had he been spared. For which dispensation of mercy and mark of favour to him, God's name ought to be praised. To his parents it was no doubt, at the time, a very heavy visitation, but they are now reunited to him, and remember no more *his* and their own anguish at the hour of parting.

During his illness there sometimes appeared delusive symptoms of his recovery. His own buoyant spirits and light-heartedness kept up to the last. He did what he could to cheer his friends, and prevent them from mourning for him. He told his grandmother he was getting better, and tried to dance his little steps before her, to shew how strong he was. When inquired at if there was anything he would like, he asked for a piece of a melon, as it was the only thing he thought he could take. It was not the season for them. A man and horse were sent in every direction to obtain one, but without success. When he was dying he looked round to see that all

were present that should be there. He missed his aunt, Elizabeth, who, not knowing that dissolution was so near, had gone out on particular business. He inquired earnestly for her, and seemed anxious to delay his departure till she came. He then stretched out his hands to her and said, "Take me in your arms as you used to take me, and let me lay my head upon your breast."

Mrs George Webster had lived near to her God, and loved the contemplation of his glorious attributes above all other subjects, and as the only satisfying portion to an immortal soul. As she drew near the gates of death, her mind was more and more fixed upon heavenly things. Some ladies who were calling, and admitted to her sick-room were talking upon the passing topics of the day. She gently said to them in her usual placid manner of reproof, "That is not a conversation for a dying person to hear."

She soon thereafter followed her sons and grandsons to the grave, where they are all laid to rest beside Dr Alexander Webster in the family burying-ground in the Greyfriars

churchyard, reposing in hope till the dawning of the Resurrection.

And now, dear reader, adieu. If any of the simple incidents recorded in these pages have a tendency to shew the beauty of holiness, and to promote the love of God in the heart, it is well. I conclude in the words of a devoted servant of God and friend of the human race, who, in describing the reward that awaits the righteous, certainly described his own high destiny.*

“It is beyond question necessary to know the truth as it is in Jesus in the love thereof; to have an experimental knowledge of divine things; to have our hearts warmed with the love of God and of goodness. Till religion is rooted in the heart, it cannot possibly influence the life and practice. That man who has not the kingdom of God *within* him, can have no real concern for its prosperity in the world *without* him. . . . What hath been said from the law of our creation is strongly enforced upon us Christians by the

* Alexander Webster, D.D.

law of grace, which unites us into one mystical body whereof Christ is the head, and which considers all believers as members of the same undivided catholic church, whereof Jesus is the Lord and King. . . . And what shall I say of that happiness and felicity which awaits such faithful servants, when welcomed to the joy of their Lord? If, in that day, not so much as a cup of cold water given to one in the name of a disciple shall lose its reward, how inconceivably great, how glorious must his reward be, who, from a principle of love to God and men, hath lived and died in the service of God and men! For him, indeed, is sown a joyful light in the Zion that is above; and there he "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever."

THE END.



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